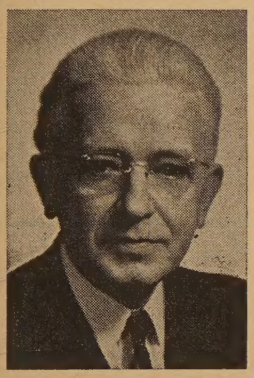
The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



Paul Scherer:

On the Moving Edge of Time

A. Roy Eckardt	•	Brotherhood
Gurdon C. Oxtoby	•	Spoken by a Son
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ROY PEARSON
COMFORTING THE AFFLICTED

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The Pulpit

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Prayer

WE thank thee, our Father, for the devotion that has kept religion alive in history and led thy church forward through the centuries. We give thanks for thy living church, the foundation of which is the faith of men; the walls and pillars, the courage of human hearts; the buttresses, the good will that reaches out into the life of humanity; and the arches that overtower its beauty and hold the temple firm, the clasp of brothers hand in hand.

Strengthen this bond of brotherhood and make us one with this vast family of believers who are united in the purpose of serving mankind. Consecrate us in this moment as we remember the valiant Christians who have gone before us—prophets, saints, pioneers and martyrs. Help us to work as builders of faith's unfinished cathedral, where all people will some day worship thee before the altar of truth and love, and will go out as classes, nations and races to live together in a harmonious world family. Amen.—*Robert M. Bartlett, First Congregational Church, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.*

The Pulpit

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VOLUME XXX FEBRUARY 1959 No. 2

Memo:

SAN FRANCISCO is always on-stage. No matter how you approach the city — by whatever highway, air lane, or water course — sight of San Francisco breaks on you as if a vast proscenium curtain had just gone up and a long rich chord was swelling from some great orchestra in the pit. San Francisco is always a picture, always "on camera," always in character, always perfectly set, always posed and poised in beauty.

Ordinarily you sweep around and down a mountainside to approach San Francisco. You round a curve or burst through a tunnel — and there gleams the alabaster, perpendicular city. The ocean throws its long blue bay arms around the hills, up which the clean white buildings climb. Unbelievable bridges pick their improbable ways across open miles of air, with tides racing under them, traffic streaming across them, far seas and distant lands beyond them, and high mountains rearing above them.

There is grandeur in the mighty lift of the Pacific, lashing the rocky ribs of the continent where they push out beyond the land. There is stiller beauty in the sea that enters by a golden gate to fill the huge harbor's bowl. There is drama in the turbulent fogs, driven by mysterious pressures back of salt horizons, churning across coastal mountains to wrap the city in whispering cloud.

But the splendor is not all in the city's situation. For here men have enhanced Creation with their building. There are some dreary stretches and some dirty streets, of course. The wonder in too many American cities, alas, is not that there are these, but that there is something more: that there is space and reach in a city's planning to match its sea winds, sparkling in from everywhere; that there is poetry in the steely thrust and lyric swing of those bridges; that there is style in a city, and an effervescence in the intellectual air that repeats the tingle in an atmosphere already bubbling from sun and sea; that there is care here for the artistic treasures of the race, and a nervous, chattering delight in creating new beauty in all the arts.

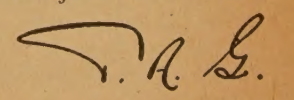
It is hard for this simple Chicago villager to keep his bearings in all the gasp and glitter of the city at the Golden Gate. Who wouldn't succumb to the allure of such a place? Who, standing there, wouldn't feel the mounting intoxication which must be the metropolitan mystique? And who would hesitate to confess it?

Here is man at his best, appreciating the greatness that is given, and rising to that grandeur in the products of his own talents and graces. When we revel in a great city we are recognizing the art and the genius, the imagination and the drive, the hard thinking and the high dreaming and the brisk doing of men who are making a new nature to supplement that old Nature on which all is built but which already, here and there, is not big enough.

A great city is a monument to men's greatness — and never let it be thought impious to memorialize man's greatness. Man's greatness is not God's greatness, of course, but man's is real greatness, and its possibility is a gift of God, and its recognition is a mediated glorification of God, and its denigration is a direct blaspheming of God the Giver.

San Francisco, despite its simmering fleshpots, is a smiling, shining symbol of the goodness in man and the sweetness there can be in living. By any standards available to us (and how else shall we speak?) the man who drafts and builds to such effect, the man who gives admiring place to other generations' painting and encourages his own, the man who assembles scholars and books and attends them, the man who brings singers and players and applauds them, the man who pushes the sciences and prospers industries, the man who ingeniously arranges his own hilarity — in this man is greatness and goodness.

Having said which, writing might cease. Except that the facts won't stop there — and neither does San Francisco. For in the middle of the glistening bay, down-stage center, is Alcatraz. The eye sees it as the ear hears it: with a shuddering chord on the sound track. "Charming villa down there," said a visiting nobleman looking down from a luxury apartment on Nob Hill. "Who owns it?" We own the Rock, the sealed, tide-torn fortress island. Men own it and hold at gunpoint the hunted down, murderous men who are on it. Alcatraz is part of the picture, too, and it is bad. Goodness is only part of the story. The whole truth has to comprehend all the facts. A city becomes a parable, and the book begun here last week is set aside while another, just as overdue, struggles with the publisher's assigned problem. "Is Man Good Or Bad?"



When Men Contradict God,
He Contradicts Them – with Love!

On the Moving Edge of Time

By Paul Scherer

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up . . . and called its name Ebenezer, for he said, "Hitherto the Lord has helped us." I Samuel 7:12.

FOR him, that was the key which unlocked the meaning of history. If you will have it, it will unlock the meaning of your history. And that, I suppose, without question is really the basic, prophetic function of all true religion. The scene is laid out on the hills of Canaan, three thousand years ago. Yet all at once you have on your hands a moment which seems to stand beyond the reach of change, where the passing centuries cannot get at it. One might say that it belongs on life's only perpetual frontier. Certainly you can locate it wherever you like, quite haphazardly, in the Old Testament or in the New. From generation to generation, on the moving edge of time which we call the present, gone before you can finish a sentence about it — always this "Hitherto," as some man confidently reads God into the past, and just as confidently, if not so explicitly, reads him therefore into the future: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." It's everywhere equally at home. And always there are those who, hearing it, set their faces toward the unknown, sure that what has been true of that unfailing Presence will go on being true forever. Some of them have to toil desperately — but no matter; others march as if they were listening to music, and nothing but the music were important!

Yet the moment you begin to look a little more closely into this business of reading God into the past, that moment you begin to wonder if perhaps it isn't a thoroughly arbitrary thing for anybody to do: as if you were saying to yourself, "Go to now, I will put together the picture-puzzle of these years that are gone, and I will put it together as I like. I will make it spell out for me what I want it to spell out. I will see in it the hand of God." The skeptic will tell you that's what faith is, and it makes no sense. He is right abo that. It makes no more sense than one of Camu characters makes in *The Plague* — indeed not much! He has just looked on at the agonize death of a little child and he says, "I will nev love any scheme of things which permits that

Observe, however, as a matter of some signi cance surely, what a strange sort of noise tho words would make on Calvary. "And when the were come to the place . . . there they crucifie him, and the malefactors, one on the right han and the other on the left." Now let's try it: " will never love any scheme of things which permi that." And it isn't a scheme of things anyway tha the Christian loves! What loving he does he do not do because he has scraped together all th evidence he could find in favor of it, and chucke out the rest. You don't fall in love that way. N body on this earth ever has. Shakespeare in on place seems to try it on for size. He is talkin about the uses of adversity, which he forthwit compares to a toad, ugly and venomous, but wea ing a precious jewel in its head; so may this ou life, says he, "find tongues in trees" — and what i they fall on you? — "books in the running brooks' — but suppose you slip and drown! — "sermons i stones" — Goliath would have had a little diffi culty there! — "and good in everything." I say you don't dare talk to me like that! I can throw enough at you to turn it into a maniac's laughter!

Look Up — and Then Around

First you have to make sure that I can listen with a knowledge of God in my heart which was already there when you started — knowledge of a God who cannot say anything or do anything in such a way as to be recognized by anybody who doesn't know him. In his own way he must first have laid his compelling hand on my life and taken it captive, as he laid his hand on those wandering tribes that struggled up at his touch out of their bondage in Egypt, sending them his prophets, holding so steadily to his purpose, in such bitter loving-kindness, coming among them finally in a man out of Nazareth, only to have a spectacle made of his love, but never quitting! He hasn't quit with me. I could scarcely blame him if he had! In the Bible you do not look around to see what you can make of life, and then

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PAUL SCHERER *has been Brown professor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, New York city, since 1946. An ordained minister in the United Lutheran Church, he became the pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, New York city in 1920. It was during his twenty-five year service at this church that Dr. Scherer became recognized as one of America's foremost preachers in both the pulpit and over the air on the nation-wide Sunday Vesper broadcasts.*

look up. When Moses "looked around" he killed a man! You look up; then you look around!

"Samuel took a stone and set it up." It may not have been quite so arbitrary as you think. When we find ourselves unable to look up and then look back and say "God," it will not be because we have not heard enough or seen enough or read enough or studied enough or thought enough. It will be because for one reason or another we have never been anywhere that mattered in his company! There used to be a program on TV, perhaps there still is, called "You Were There": when they captured Major Andre, or when Commodore Dewey steamed into Manila Bay — it was usually fighting of some sort! But no matter how often the announcer kept saying "You were there," he could never quite bring it off! God does. You read the first few chapters of Genesis, and you know very well you were there in Eden. That is where we too were shut out of Paradise, you and I, because we took things into our own hands and set out to be God our very selves. It is the most real place of all the places on earth. And now we want it back, and look for it everywhere, as Auden says, and find nowhere that is not a kind of desert. Then we see that our way like Israel's lies across that desert, as does the way of all human history, every stage of the journey, Exodus, Kingdom, Exile, along toward Calvary. And there, far out of earshot on the street, or at some party, but you hear it, the old Negro spiritual keeps asking, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" And in your heart of hearts you know that that is exactly where you were!

Truth's Compulsion

Then let somebody rush in and try to wipe out the past which has become your past. Let him tell you it means nothing, that it would all have been the same if there had been no God; not one iota, not one jot or tittle of it would have been different. The world wags on as if he did not exist. So that even the language which says he does has no content. Instead of being afraid to admit that, we had better insist on it. The language which says he does exist has another kind of content: it does not terminate in a fact; it terminates in a relationship which interprets the facts. A relationship which sees the very hiddenness of God's purpose, its silent concealments in a world where nature and history alike say both Yes and No to him, and with equal vehemence, sees them all as the ceaseless beckoning of One who refuses to write out his name so that you cannot betray him or deny him, and makes no other arrangement except that when you contradict him, with his love he will contradict you. His only compulsion is "the compulsion of a truth" which plays havoc with all our preconceived ideas of meaning, a truth that does not derive from what has been called "the inevitable consent of the reasoning mind"; it derives from "the leap of the suddenly illumined heart." And you will not keep that from saying "God" where many a man would say no God is!

In *The Visit,* a play taken from the German of Deurrenmatt, the Swiss playwright, a vengeful woman, for a wrong he had done her, brings down ruin on a respected member of a little community; and he cannot be dissuaded from facing it, cost what it will. He knows that his guilt was the guilt of his youth, and that what is happening is out of all proportion to it. There is no justice being done in the death which his neighbors arrange for him; but he will go through with it to save them — as it turns out! — from a desolation not nearly so great as that which they bring on themselves by having the life choked out of him. And that's the end of it. One critic whose criticism I read could see in it nothing but unrelieved darkness: from beginning to end it was to him only one more mordant commentary on human life. And the only mordant comment it made was on the human life where no grace is because it isn't having any, thank you very much! While in the darkness that broods over it, for anybody who has brought with him the memory of what God has done, there would seem to brood the thicker darkness which settled down one day over Calvary. Only when you have heard that answer have you looked into the abyss of that bitter vengeance as far as it is given a man to look.

An Inclusive "Hitherto"

"Samuel took a stone and set it up." He didn't do it merely to boast of a fleeting victory over the Philistines or because somebody had reminded him when he was discouraged of how it was with Abraham or Moses! He did it in order to say something profounder than any of that, not just about part of the past, about all of it, far and near; something inside of him, at "the very marrow of his being." And he chose to do it precisely on the spot where Israel not long before had lost to her enemies the ark of God's covenant, that visible sign of his presence in the midst of her! "And he called its name Ebenezer, for he said, 'Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.'" And that "hitherto" didn't leave out anything!

But this explicit reading of God into the past reads him by implication into the future as well. The "hitherto" looks up, leaves out nothing and then looks both ways — back and forward! Though indeed it seems to me considerably more disquieting as it looks forward than it is when it looks back. I do not understand what grounds we have for thinking so comfortably of the prospect, now that we are Christians. It was of course quite the reverse in New Testament times. Nobody then would have found it easy to suppose that God was somehow engaged to reduce the strain on their lives, perhaps even by whittling down his demands, making them a little less severe at any rate. We do have such a friend in Jesus. Why may we not expect him to provide us with a few straight answers to a few difficult questions? Did he not himself call his Spirit the Comforter? And multitudes beyond any man's counting go on being disillusioned, simply because they have never been taught, it has never been hammered at them relentlessly, that

(Continued on page 21)

By Roy Pearson

COMFORTING

SOMEONE has said that it is the business of Christianity to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, and someone else remarked about the great Jowett that wherever he went, he strengthened saints and humbled sinners. The two phrasings are not identical in meaning because it is far more likely that the comfortable will always be sinners than that the afflicted will always be saints, but in both instances the truth is sufficiently similar to be treated as a single charge set down to the preacher's account.

Unfortunately, the preacher has too seldom paid his bills in either column of that account. Gandhi was once a guest in a home in which he was asked if he ever went to the cinema. "No," he laughed, "I'm like a frog in a well, immersed in his own affairs!"

With reference both to the undeserved sorrows of some of his people and to the equally undeserved satisfactions of others, it can often be said of the preacher that he suffers in fact but not in awareness the same limitations which Gandhi suffered in confession but not in actuality. The sermon is croaked by a frog in a well, immersed in its own affairs, and acutely sensitive neither to his congregation's abysmal afflictions nor to its terrible comforts, the preacher speaks to life as if it were fiction and to fiction as if it were life.

I

More often than he thinks, the parish minister is not sufficiently alert to the need of the afflicted for comfort. At the time of his graduation from seminary, he is likely to be so concerned about saving the church from its nineteen hundred years of sin that he has little leisure for upholding mankind through its even longer centuries of unexplained sorrow and pain. As his ministry continues, he rebels against the easy nostrums of the psychological cultists, and confusing the bad with the good, he throws out the good with the bad. And in the waning days of his professional career, he has been so long exposed to hum suffering that the infection of sympathy finds h immune.

Not completely representative of all minist or even of most ministers, this isolation from t deeper agonies of men is still one of the common causes of homiletical irrelevance. When Dionysi of Heracles grew overfat from excessive indulgen he often fell into coma. The time came when h surgeons could restore him to consciousness on by pricking him with long needles, and even th was sometimes ineffective because the fat had lo its sense of feeling. The preacher is a man singular complacency if he never fears a simil destruction of his own sensitivity to the needs his people, and a disciplined employment of th imagination is indispensable to significant preac ing.

A simple example is that of forcing yourse into context with contemporary tragedy. You as yourself what you were doing when the Arizon blew up at Pearl Harbor and 1104 officers and me lay dead or dying. Were you sleeping quietl between the cool, white sheets of your bed, o talking happily with friends, or taking a stroll o a lovely country lane? Or you try to remembe where you were when the bomb ground out th life of Hiroshima. Were you sailing on the bay or watching a moving picture, or eating a mea with your family? The hours are few when no man is murdered, or woman raped, or little child mal treated. And how are we spending these hours o their agony? Are we fretting because it has started to rain and the picnic is spoiled?

From such enforced concern with major trag edy it is not a long step for the preacher to use his imagination in a similar way with the mem bers of his own parish. He sits down at his desk to write his next sermon, and his heart is aflame with impatience as he holds in close relationship the horrible agonies of two thirds of mankind and the even more horrible comforts of the rest. This time his sermon will do some good, he tells himself. This time he will lock all caution in the closet, stop his ears against its cries and tell his people precisely what he thinks of them. He will give no quarter to anyone: he will utterly demolish those priggish, complacent, self-satisfied, Pharisaic hypocrites who sit out there in the pews.

ROY PEARSON, *dean of Andover Newton Theological School, is an editorial associate of The Pulpit. He has served pastorates in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and is well-known as a preacher and author. The above article is a condensation of a chapter from Dr. Pearson's new book,* The Ministry of Preaching, *to be published this spring by Harper.*

THE AFFLICTED

On most occasions, it is to be hoped, however, that such a project is undertaken only in anticipatory imagination and that the preacher's flights of fancy take him high enough to let him see that God's applause is less than wholehearted. It is not that the contemplated condemnation is not deserved but only that it is not universally deserved and that the shotgun blast intended for the guilty will almost certainly do far more damage to the innocent. As he sits down at his desk to write his next sermon, the wise preacher will recall more than a part of his congregation. At the risk of betraying his own calling, he will not forget the lonely hosts who have found it "so exhausting just existing," and fearing the verdict that he allowed the guilty to escape unaccused, he will also fear a judgment like that of Carlyle on the writings of Sir Walter Scott:

> The sick heart will find no healing here, the darkly struggling heart no guidance; the Heroic that is in all men no divine awakening voice.

II

In undertaking to comfort the afflicted, however, the preacher soon becomes aware that inclination is not identical with competence, and once he starts to probe his people's pain, he finds dimensions which he never knew existed.

On the front page of the *Daily Evening Traveler,* published in Boston on Tuesday, January 13, 1874, there is a formidable list of afflictions, and among them are the following: fullness of the blood in the head, acidity of the stomach, nausea, heartburn, disgust of food, fullness or weight in the stomach, sour eructations, sinking or fluttering at the pit of the stomach, swimming of the head, hurried and difficult breathing, fluttering at the heart, choking or suffocating sensations when in a lying posture, dimness of vision, dots or webs before the sight, fever and dull pain in the head, deficiency of perspiration, yellowness of the skin and eyes, pain in the side, chest or limbs, and sudden flashes of heat in the flesh. Anyone claiming the power to heal could scarcely be accused of selecting an easy case if he offered to demonstrate his capacity with such a set of symptoms, but the reader is immediately assured that a warranted cure exists — "perfectly tasteless, elegantly coated with sweet gum." It is Radway's Pills at twenty-five cents a box!

There are still too many pill-dispensers in the pulpit, and the pat on the back, the command to "brace up," and the confident prescription of psychological sedation are far too prevalent to encourage intelligent complacency. But sooner or later, most ministers become aware that the sources of abiding comfort are not reached except along the avenues of prayer and fasting. They have tried the pat on the back, and they have done no more than speed the sinking man's descent into the quicksand. They have cried, "Brace up!" only to see the helpless individual collapse at their feet. The healing of the human heart is one of the fields of man's endeavor where good intentions are not enough and where fools who walk in angels' footsteps discover at last that an angel's stride is long and swift.

The ability to administer comfort through the preaching ministry is partly a matter of knowledge and skill: it is a capacity both in the "what" and in the "how." Some of the needed competence comes through study and some through practice. It comes through reading, thinking, consultation, and the trial which sometimes succeeds and sometimes fails but always is evaluated in the light of soundly Christian faith and purpose. The literature of pastoral psychology is richly helpful to the preacher at this point, and seminary programs for clinical training in hospitals provide an excellent avenue toward increased homiletical effectiveness with those in need of comfort. A Welsh pastor once remarked that if he were drowning at the beach, he would rather see on the shore a Mohammedan who could swim than a Christian who could not, and it is essential that in the talents of the preacher the harmlessness of doves should not be thought to remove the need for the wisdom of serpents. If it is necessary that the preacher be willing, it is also necessary that he know and be able.

Yet the difficulty of comforting the afflicted is not exhausted in the fields either of personal availability or of strictly professional competence; for the preacher needs another weapon in his arsenal. He needs sympathy. By this I mean that he has learned to "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." He sits where his people sit, and facing life from that perspective, he sees with their eyes and hears with their ears. In

a sense which is not an offense to another man's uniqueness but a tribute to it, he withdraws himself from his own inheritance of individuality and circumstance and so inhabits the unwanted peculiarities of the afflicted person that he himself becomes the man who has just been told about his wife's death in an airplane crash, or the woman who is dying of cancer, or the high school boy who has been arrested for stealing a neighbor's automobile.

In part, the achievement of sympathy is the fruit of the lived anguish of unwanted experience. The preacher may not have entered the dark valley on the same path as the person whom he is trying to comfort, but somewhere in the valley's deepest shadows the two trails have converged at a single point, and when the pulpit describes the lonely landscape, the pew requires no reassurance that the pulpit knows whereof it speaks. In the midst of the awful profundities of pain, the preacher who never has suffered will always bear the stigma of the scribe. He is a relative only by adoption. His authority is derivative, and the accidents which brought him good fortune have become the circumstances which leave him ineffectual.

In part, however, the essential sympathy is a vicarious experience by which the preacher insinuates himself into the heart of another not simply in the sense that a minister who has lost his wife can understand the sorrow of a woman who has lost her husband but rather in the sense that a minister who has never suffered such a loss at all has earned the ability to feel like the bereaved individual in need of his help. This imaginative involvement in the life of another does not come easily, and it is no harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than for an unafflicted man to enter that of the afflicted.

III

It is precisely because comforting the afflicted is so obviously difficult that the preacher needs dependable criteria against which his own performance can be judged, and at the risk of oversimplifying complex issues, these criteria can be summarized in the single question, "Does the comfort leave the comforted a better Christian or a worse?" The sedative which hides the need for surgery is not an asset but a liability, and if the waters which flow from the pulpit are too heavily sugared, they may be the bearers not of health but only of nausea. The purpose of the sermon is less to reduce burdens than to increase the capacity of the burdened, and one of the surest tests by which the quality of the pulpit's solace can be determined is to ask whether the sermon left the congregation weaker or stronger, more fearful or more courageous, more eager to be served or more eager to serve.

The real power of the church is in the church's laymen. Unfortunately, however, not all ministers are eager to nurture that power, and it is a matter of even deeper regret that some of their reluctance is the fruit of nothing but their own insecurity. What if the layman should prove himself a be preacher than the preacher himself? What if p ple should find in him more priestly qualities t they have found in their priest? What if the u dained pastor should be more welcome in haunts of need than the pastor by professi At the very moment when they are castigat their people because they do not take their Ch tianity more seriously, many ministers are secr hoping that their words will not precipitate a activity which might either increase their own ministrative problems or diminish their o tacitly assumed stature as the best Christian the congregation. It is not hard for pigmies to defensive in the presence of giants, and if there to be anything gigantic in his church, the insecu minister wants to be it.

Thus it often happens that the minister e courages his people's weakness rather than the strength. He enjoys the stance of superiority, a he prospers only through the multiplication dependents. Feeding on those who think they fe on him, he uses the afflicted to comfort his ow affliction, and descending from his pulpit, he h failed one of the principal tests by which h preaching must be judged. He has led his peop to be not better Christians but worse — n stronger but weaker, not more courageous b more fearful, not more eager to serve but mo eager to be served.

IV

This leads to the observation that man's su ficiency is of God and that any other context fo the attempt to comfort the afflicted will alway prove inadequate. The origin of a headache ma be in the head, but it may also be in the stomach the liver or the foot, and the specialist who con fines his examination to the cranial cavity ma emerge with no more than symptoms having neither cause nor cure. In a similar way, most o the troubles which a minister faces in his con gregation are involved in entangling alliances o ancestry and environment, and dealing only with the problem's specific expression, he is likely t find himself mopping a wet floor without turning off the faucet which is keeping it wet. The suf- ferer's relationship to his suffering depends almost entirely on the sufferer's relationship to God, and trying to handle the first without reference to the last is like trying to walk to London on a ship bound for New York. We go to God for healing, or we are not healed. The most direct approach to the problem is the most circuitous. The shortest distance between two points is triangular. There is no comprehension of man except in fellowship with God.

Hence the soundest reassurance which the preacher can give to the hurt and harried people of his congregation is the reestablishment of faith in their Creator. He thrusts into their awareness a providential hand like that which gives steadiness to the uneasy traveler on a great ocean liner. For the most part, the ship's interior appointments

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Even Preaching **For** *Better Human Relations Can Be an Attempt at Evasion*

Brotherhood

By A. Roy Eckardt

QUITE commonly, brotherhood is looked upon as an ideal to be achieved. The older ones among us were originally nurtured in an idealistic scheme and in an idealistic land where it has been praiseworthy to talk about ideals and to seek to promote ideals. However, when we attend seriously to what the Bible says, we see that brotherhood is not an ideal. Brotherhood is something quite the opposite of an ideal. It is a fact. The Book of Acts reminds us that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men." The world-wide human family under God, the Father of men, is a fact.

There is nothing esoteric here, nothing mysterious or difficult to grasp. We have a common humanity. The chairman of the Bethlehem Steel Company and the lady who cleans his office must both brush their teeth or they may develop cavities and have to go to the dentist — unless, to be sure, they have false teeth, although this in itself can show their common humanity. Such things as sets of teeth lie at the foundation of brotherhood.

We are more than a little foolish when we speak of those who somehow embody brotherhood "more" than other persons do. I am not "more" a father than the father of my child's playmate. I am not more a brother to my neighbor than he is to me. Thus we are foolish when we refer to certain men as "promoting" brotherhood. The word "promote" is symptomatic of a Madison Avenue generation, where men in grey flannel attire ply their often little-needed and hence much-sought-after wares.

Traps

For all our advertising neurosis as a people, even we Americans would be a little taken aback to see an ad in the paper or during a station break propagating the gospel that the earth is round. Facts ought not to require any promotion. Brotherhood hardly stands in need of advertising. Every advertising man, no matter how honest, has something of a guilty conscience. Down underneath he knows that his "line" just may not measure up to what he claims for it. But we do not plead for brotherhood. Dean Liston Pope of Yale points out that no one advocates racial equality; he simply announces it. So too with brotherhood as a whole. This is the way the world is made. Brotherhood is not an ideal to be promoted; it is a fact to be announced.

Another trap is the notion that brotherhood is a force to be employed. I am rather certain that for many Americans, including a number in the churches, brotherhood is a kind of nice power that helps us to gain friends and influence nations — nations which, for their part, rather self-righteously and with little political realism, are ambitious to make justice for the American Negro the price of their cooperation with the West. From this general point of view, brotherhood is like sunshine or wind or rain. It may come and go like the seasons. As in prayers for rain, brotherhood is to be "fostered" with the aid of an observance — rather like the "faith" or "peace of mind" that many today urge us to cultivate. Rain brings the crops to forestall the menace of hunger; brotherhood brings national health and prestige to overcome the menace of communism. Here, rain! Here, brotherhood!

Whatever else it is, brotherhood is surely not this. It does not come and go like a puppy dog. Are we no more than primitive tribesmen beseeching this nice power to remain and blossom among us? Perhaps we are primitives after all. But this makes us practitioners of magic, devotees of superstition rather than devotees of a rational faith. The individual who takes seriously the biblical witness knows quite well that brotherhood is not a spirit to be venerated or sought for with an ulterior motive in mind. It is, indeed, something quite different.

Brotherhood is a relation. That sounds terribly theoretical, an "egghead" word if there ever was one. But the truth is that "relation" is a good family word: "My wife's relations." The description may not always induce the happiest memories, yet relation is a good family word. I am related to my wife through the marriage bond and to my children "by blood," as the colloquialism has it. Yet, I have other relations. While I

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have specific relations — to wife, children, father, mother — I also bear a relation that unites me or binds me to all other human beings — a fact, but a peculiar kind of fact.

Inescapable Relation

For the unique thing about this relation is that it is inescapable. A human being can remain unmarried. He or she can refrain from entering, or be deprived from entering, upon the marriage relation. You have known people, as I have, who are without any living relations. This is quite impossible in the relation of brotherhood. Just as with the relation of brother in the immediate family, we do not ask other men to be our brothers. Nor do we accept them as our brothers. God "hath made of one blood all nations of men." No blood relation is ever a matter of personal decision. No blood relation can be made to come or left to go. Brotherhood is not a force to be employed; it is a relation that can be neither manipulated nor avoided.

If these things are true, then, you are already asking, what in the world is the purpose of these remarks? It is already obvious that I am not trying to get you to rally 'round the flag of an ideal. Nor am I beseeching you to beat the magical drums that brotherhood may be conjured up among us. The relation is already among us, and it was here long before each of us ever arrived on the scene. The suggestion *might* be made that, since facts and relations very often have to be discovered, here is the justification for talking up brotherhood. On October 12 the "discovery" of America is commemorated. This continent was a fact long before the white man ever set eyes on it, a great land mass that had stood all the while in relation to the continent of Europe from which the explorers came. Yet the fact required discovery.

We need reflect for no more than a moment to see how out of order is this kind of excuse for our subject. Before the time of Columbus and the other explorers there *was* no "America" in the present rich meaning of that symbol. But there was never a time in human history when men were not brothers. Brotherhood is a discovery, but it is a strange kind of discovery. Every man must make it for himself — to the degree that he fulfills himself as a man, to the degree that he grows up. The discovery is of something eternal. Like the Kingdom of God as a whole, brotherhood is a reality that grasps us in *any* time and in *any* place. Brotherhood is the nature of things come alive in men.

Granted that brotherhood is a discovery, it is not the sort of discovery that we commemorate by means of a special occasion. The present thoughts are, however, commemorative — in a tragic sense. We have read from the fourth chapter of Genesis:

> Cain said to Abel his brother, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me f… the ground. And now you are cursed from the gro… which has opened its mouth to receive your brot… blood from your hand."

The sober truth is that our subject says a… more about us than it does about brotherhoo… such. We do have a guilty conscience all rig… not that of the advertising man promoting … product but more like that of the mental pati… who, having turned his back on reality, someh… does not escape his own self-accusations. The th… we commemorate here is the sentence of a va… bondage upon us. For we are Cain, the slayer… Abel. The occasion reminds us — strange how … must be reminded — that something has g… wrong. D. R. Davies tells of surveying the ruins… a house in England after a Nazi blitz. He … marked to the erstwhile owner that here … original sin in operation. The lady protested … hemently, saying that surely he did not believe … that dreadful doctrine. He replied, "Such drea… ful happenings as these" — pointing to the rui… — "demand some sort of dreadful doctrine in e… planation." We may not wish to swallow M… Davies' theology as a whole but it is at least p… sible that his science is good here. I seem to rec… the scientific principle that a cause ought someh… to be equal to the effects.

The Plight of Cain

Our topic does not tell me what I *am*. De… down I already know what I am, a brother. … tells me, instead, that I have become so willfu… so ridiculously puffed up with my white supre… acies that I say "No" to the facts and the relatio… of life. The question, "Am I my brother's keeper?… which each of us asks himself a million times … day, only occurs after the brother is already b… trayed. Otherwise we should not have to ask i…

Now Columbus could, of course, have bee… silly enough to go back to Spain and report "… saw nothing," no facts, no relations. Our name … Cain and we are capable of shutting our hearts t… brotherhood. This is one formidable reason tha… we are forced to talk about brotherhood. We *hav*… to commemorate it — because we are silly. O… better, we introduce brotherhood as a problem… and presumably many of us find it a meaningfu… problem, because we are profoundly disturbe… over our silliness.

Some men never get over being silly, and you… question and mine is whether the adjective is al… ways going to apply to us. We do have the choic… of going through life with our eyes tight shut t… the truth that we have over two billion brothers o… this planet. How is the trick of saying "No" ac… complished? In simple ways, like the asking o… questions: "Some of my best friends are Jews, but … have you ever tried to do business with Jews?" … "Some of my best friends are Negroes but would … you like your daughter to marry a Negro?" Here … is the terror in the whole dreadful business: As … a result of being like this, we go through life as … self-imposed outcasts, fugitives and wanderers upon … the earth. This is the tragedy in refusing to see the…

fact and in refusing to admit the relation. By trying to cast out others, through slaying them in word and deed, we end up as outcasts.

Most fortunately, however, this is not the end of the matter. The plight of Cain can be overcome.

Some men try to put it like this: If we are going to use our heads, we must see that neither a fact nor a relation can motivate the moral life. There is, indeed, something more ultimate than all mere facts and all mere relations. It is *truth,* of which these other things are simply reflections, or, less conservatively, incarnations. And this one thing I will do, I will pledge myself to this final truth. Better, I will be grasped by this truth, with all the challenges this will bring to my life.

The Christian faith puts it differently, and much more compellingly: "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come." Who is this speaking? It is the one who said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Thus speaks the elder brother through whom men can live as brothers again, whatever their "feelings" or acts, their theologies or their spiritual states. This has *happened* in some places with some people. And it can always happen again. It means that we do not have to be silly. It means that there need be no need for the clergy to come and disturb the tranquillity of our Sabbath by haranguing us on the subject of brotherhood. For we are empowered to overcome our silliness, we are created anew to rejoice in the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom that is meant for here and now — and us.

Comforting

(Continued from page 8)

resemble those of a fine hotel, but sooner or later one notices a subtle difference. Into the bottom of every chair there is screwed a large brass eye. Directly beneath it there is another brass eye in the deck, and connecting the two is a length of sturdy rope. The tables are bolted to the deck and the pictures to the walls. Huge brass hooks bind the pianos in place, and even the flower pots have strong metal fasteners to keep them from rolling away. During most of the voyage these measures may be neither noticed nor needed, but against the wild winter days of pitching and rolling the naval architects have made the needed adaptation to the sea. Comparable grounds for assurance provide the only dependable foundation of enduring human sanity in the face of sore affliction, and the preacher builds in vain who builds without them. Translated from the nautical to the theological, this is the faith that the freedom of men is not unlimited. It is the faith that thus far God will let the evil have its way but no farther. It is the faith that in the final reckoning the means of life are fastened down and that nothing is left to chance or swept beyond God's power to control.

If it is true that the preacher must sometimes goad his people into sharing God's impatience, it is equally true that he is often called to help them share His patience. God has all the time there is. He does not have to hurry. He does not have to be anxious. There is no need for God to act tomorrow morning: He has forever, and he can afford to take his time because all time belongs to him. Furthermore — and this often seems most important of all to the fretful men and women who are trying to pass through troubled times without being destructively troubled themselves — God gives his own eternity to those who love and serve him, so that we, too, have all the time there is; we, too, do not have to be hurried or anxious; and we, too, can afford to wait because, like God himself, we have forever. Acorns do not grow to oaks in afternoons, nor giving birth to a child at nine o'clock in the morning do you watch him leave college at noon; and it is one of the essentials in ministering to the troubled and the sorrowful that the preacher lead them to a place where they can share the poet's insight:

> The grass grows slowly up the hill
> With faith the torrent cannot kill;
> And rocks are rough, and still the clover
> The stony field will yet run over —
> And I know nothing that the true,
> The good, the gentle cannot do.
>
> So toils an undiscouraged God
> And covers barren fields with sod;
> And so will hate and sin surrender
> To faith still strong and love still tender —
> And I know nothing that the true,
> The good, the gentle cannot do.*

This is not to imply that gentleness exhausts the attributes of God which are relevant to comforting the afflicted. The love of God does not exclude his justice, nor does his tender compassion neutralize his terrible wrath. The root of much personal affliction is the failure of the individual to be Christlike in anything but verbal declaration, and although the square pegs of the self-centered life find ready homes in the square holes of a perverted contemporary culture, they are wholly incapable of residence in the round holes of God's deeper purpose. There is some affliction which has no other author than itself. Its victims are living as if God did not exist — and he does; as if they had no one to depend upon but themselves — and they do; as if material prosperity were the final sign of success — and it is not; as if a man has a right to be dishonest if he can get away with it — and he does not; as if hatred and jealousy were respectable emotions — and they are not. The ultimate source of comfort is God. It is the whole of God, and when the preacher lifts his hand to heal his people's pain, the hand is incomplete without both the flesh and the bone, without both the softness of compassion and the firmness of truth.

* "The Undiscouraged God" (author unknown), *Masterpieces of Religious Verse,* edited by James Dalton Morrison (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958).

Spoken by a Son

By Gurdon C. Oxtoby

OF FIRST importance to the Christian life is the belief that God has made himself known to men. The starting point is not man's search for God. It is God's search for man. The position of the Scriptures is that God has spoken to the human race. To successive generations he has revealed who he is, what he demands of men, and what he wants men to become.

The work of Christ from his incarnation to his resurrection is the exhibition of his statement, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." Those who walked with the Master, those who heard him teach and preach to the multitudes, who saw him lay the hand of healing upon those who suffered, those who contemplated his almighty works, and those who heard him speak as never man spoke before, were convinced that here was the world's clearest expression of what God is like.

In former days Amos and Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah had set forth the justice and righteousness of God, his holiness and love, and his demands of men. Through Christ came the same message, ever more clearly and persuasively, so that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews begins his letter with the words, "God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son."

The message of God is spoken to men not in words but in facts. God reveals himself to man in nature, in history, and in personal experience. In nature he is seen as the Creator and Sustainer of all that is. "The heavens are telling the glory of God," says the psalmist, "and the firmament proclaims his handiwork." But he goes on to add, "There is no speech nor are there words, their voice is not heard. Yet their voice goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world." In the facts of the world about us, the intricacy of its laws and the balance of its forces, we learn something of the ways of God. So also do we learn by observing the events of human history. A careful reading of the affairs of men reveals the providential dealings of a God through whose righteous judgments is seen his purpose th... man should come to know him and learn obedien... to his will. God speaks in the events of histo... He speaks also through personal experience. N... only are his promptings felt in moments of inn... illumination, but also in situations and occurrenc... which, though doubt-provoking and disturbing ... the time, are seen in retrospect to have been ma... ters of divine guidance. These three avenues ... communication — nature, history, and person... experience — are channels by which the Fath... makes his children to know about himself. Whi... not characterized by audible speech, they a... nevertheless the means by which God speaks ... men. They are the word of God.

The approach of the Lenten season invit... our consideration of the supreme event in histo... by which God has spoken to men. In the Galilea... carpenter successive generations have found th... embodiment of the truths made known by Go... The Word proclaimed by prophets and seers ... old now became the Word made flesh. But it wa... still the proclamation of God's righteousness, ju... tice, and love. As the Scripture writer says, "Go... spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but i... these last days he has spoken to us by a Son." Le... us consider three aspects of God's message to men... and of its significance for us.

Righteousness

God's word is potent for righteousness. Thi... was discerned long ago by Jeremiah who con... fronted certain false prophets, whose way of living... was at wide variance with the message they pur... ported to teach. Because they themselves were... loose and careless in their living they had no... message for their people. According to Jeremiah... they said to everyone who stubbornly followed his... own heart, "No evil shall come upon you." And... Jeremiah adds, "What has straw in common with... wheat? Is not my word like fire, and like a hammer... which breaks the rock in pieces?" That is to say,... the true word of God is righteous in its character... and it is potent for righteousness.

A similar attitude is taken by Deuteronomy... which warns in its thirteenth chapter, "If a proph... et arises among you or a dreamer of dreams, and... gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or... wonder which he tells you comes to pass, and if...

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he says, 'Go after other gods' which you have not known 'and serve them' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." In this passage not even the fulfillment of a prediction is sufficient to authenticate the prophet if his message goes contrary to the truth which God has revealed concerning his demands of men. No, the true word of the Lord is potent for righteousness. It points to a way of life which is in harmony with the character of a God who is true and just and good and who demands of men the same kind of truth and justice and goodness.

Character

God's word is progressive in character. It speaks to men where they are and it continues to speak in ever stronger tones as men progress along the way that God has set for them. There was a time when men looked up into the skies at night, and seeing there the stars, wondered what they were. Some thought they were gods, and worshiped them. Some thought they were the souls of those departed from this life. Some considered they were powers that shaped the destiny of men, and there arose the so-called science of astrology by which man hoped to understand and control his destiny by observing the movements of heavenly bodies. The modern astronomer trains his instruments on those same skies and sees there uncounted suns revolving in orbits at unimaginable distances, and thousands of galaxies other than our own, each with its system of revolving suns. By focusing his spectroscope upon a given star he discerns by observing absorption lines the very chemicals that are existent in that distant body. As a matter of fact, the gas helium is so named because it was thus discovered in the sun before it was found on earth.

Why has this change come about? No more information comes down from the stars today than came down ten thousand years ago. The stars have not changed, but men have. Men have learned how to interpret what comes to them, and the truer interpretation comes because men's knowledge has progressed. So it is with God's revelation of himself. Some discern but dimly, others more clearly. The newer Christian hears and interprets the word of God sometimes but vaguely as it comes to him. The mature Christian, with clearer perception, hears the voice of God speaking more clearly because he has experienced God's power. This is what may be called God's progressive revelation of himself.

We are not by this term to understand that God himself grows. God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in those characteristics which belong to him. It is man who changes, not God. Nor are we to understand that God is arbitrary in his self-revelation, like one who turns a faucet on, permitting to flow some measure of knowledge of himself; then closes off the valve. No, it is man who is limited by his capacity to understand. It is as though we approach God's great ocean of truth to draw from it as much as we can. How big is our container? He who comes with a small measure can take only a small measure away. He who comes with a larger container can receive more. Whether the apprehension of God's truth is limited to a cupful or a larger quantity is dependent upon the individual himself. As we grow we become capable of learning more. And God is ever ready to match the ability of men to receive by filling whatever vessel they bring. God's word is progressive in character.

Purpose

God's word is redemptive in purpose. The prophets picture God as bringing just retribution on those whose careless ways of living merit his righteous anger. And yet, in the Old Testament, judgment is always in order to redemption. As Ezekiel puts it: "Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?" Jeremiah stated: "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart." Yet that prophet's message was always, "Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and wrongdoing, and dwell upon the land which the Lord has given you from of old." The divine purpose in judgment is not punishment, but redemption.

This is the great theme in the teaching of the Servant of the Lord, found in Isaiah, Chapters 40-55. The nation has indeed received of the Lord double for all her sins, yet she is to be a light to the Gentiles, that God's name may be known to the ends of the earth. In a moment of supreme inspiration, the great prophetic writer gives voice to the truth that the Servant of the Lord, by his uncomplaining bearing of penalties due to others, brings about the salvation of those who truly understand what has happened. Small wonder it is that sensitive and understanding souls have seen in this a foreshadowing of the sufferings of our Lord. Men are not redeemed by kings who sit on thrones; men are redeemed by those who give themselves for a cause.

When Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was stoned to death because of his witness, we read that those who took his life laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul, who was consenting to his death. Stephen's conduct must have made a great impression on this young man, if we may judge from subsequent events. For though Saul continued to persecute the Christians with zeal and energy, it may well be that he now did so with a haunting inner uncertainty, for the memory of Stephen may have plagued his conscience, paving the way for that time when, fallen blindly to the earth, he cried out, "Who are you, Lord?" and received the reply, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." Stephen's suffering may have prepared for Paul's redemption.

This is the message of the Lenten season. The self-will of men has brought them under the de-

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Though We Crowd Our Walls with Sentrie
There Is One Invasion We Cannot Withstan

Hiding from God

By Robert J. McCracken

And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Genesis 3:8.

THE THIRD chapter of Genesis ought not to be regarded as a record of literal fact. The story of Adam and Eve is not history in the sense that the story of George Washington is history. The beginnings of man's life on earth lie far behind our records and traditions. But long before he was capable of history or science early man asked himself questions about the ultimate issues — where life comes from, and death, and pain, and sin. And that God revealed himself to man at this lowly stage is apparent from the Genesis stories. They do not teach history or science; they do teach timeless spiritual truths. They tell us of God's creative wisdom and power, of man's native kinship to God, of his calling to rule over nature, of his sin, of God's judgment and mercy. The person who cannot hear God speak to him in the story of creation and the fall will have difficulty in hearing God's voice anywhere.

"And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." That is a vivid and true picture of what from the beginning of things man has always been trying to do. He has attempted to escape from God. He has willed himself out of the subordinate relation to God. He has made himself, his will, his interests, his desires, central and final. In its essence this is what original sin is — the deification of self with for its inevitable consequence a turning away from God in disobedience and rebellion. It is as old as the world. Not only so, it can be seen in every age and in every land.

Take the case of Jonah. "Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it: for their wickedness has come up before Me.' But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish away from the presence of the Lord." In another setting, in another age, it is in substance the Genesis story all over again. Like Adam and Eve, Jonah made himself and his inclinations central and final.

Take the case of Augustine. As told in the *Confessions,* his is a most moving story, the story of a man running away from God, using every stratagem to put himself at a distance from God. He turned to passion, then from passion to rhetoric, then from rhetoric to philosophy, then from philosophy back again to passion. Finally, every escape cut off, he surrendered to what he so long had feared, and gave to the world out of his own experience the unforgettable saying: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee."

Take the case of Francis Thompson. Many are familiar with his poem *The Hound of Heaven* but not with the fact that it was a transcript of his own experience. For years he strove hard to escape from God, turned for security to nature, to the society of friends, to love, but all in vain.

> I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
> I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
> I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
> Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
> I hid from Him, and under running laughter
> . . . . . .
> From those strong Feet, that followed, followed after.

I have been citing well-known names, but this is the story of every man. Human nature, made to go God's way, has an inveterate tendency to take its own way. God by definition is good, gracious, loving, but do we put him first, subordinate ourselves and our aims and purposes to him, make his will sovereign? Do we feel any hunger of soul for God that compares with the hunger of the body for food? Do we ever talk about him, even to our closest friends? If people talk to us about him are we uncomfortable and embarrassed? Al Ghazzali, the Moslem mystic, has a sentence that cuts like a knife. "If you are never alone with God, it is not because you are too busy; it is because you don't care for Him, don't like Him. And you had better face the facts."

Let us try to face the facts. The first and great

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commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Yet nothing is more difficult than to love God. Somehow, something in us resists him, dislikes him, tries one way after another to avoid him. Perhaps we don't admit this. Perhaps we conceal it from ourselves. We may feel that Luther was exaggerating when he said that man has a passion against Deity, that he cannot abide Deity. But H. G. Wells in his last book, *Mind at the End of Its Tether,* searching for a name for the Supreme Being which would not have the beneficent associations which belong to such words as God, or Absolute, or Life Force, or Power, decided on "The Antagonist." I am reminded of a surgeon who said that if he succeeded in appearing before the Most High he would present him with a cancerous bone and ask for an explanation. These are extreme instances but consider our own case. If we are absolutely honest with ourselves we do have to admit that we don't really want God, not as we want money, security, comfort, or at any rate that our desire for him is pitifully spasmodic and half-hearted. How much of your average day do you devote to God? Nothing makes one more conscious of poverty and shallowness of spirituality than this. We have to confess, as Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, so frankly did, that any thoughts about self, sometimes thoughts of evil, daydreams, idle fancies, easily find an abode in the mind. How is it that the thought of God will not stay there, except with a very few persons? "If I had any real love of God," Jowett said, "would not my mind dwell upon Him?" It is a very pertinent question. Isn't it our question too?

Solemn Searching Voices

The Genesis story, profound in its spiritual diagnosis, offers an explanation. Man, it says, *fears* God. He does not want to get too close to him. He is secretly resentful of the divine demands. He wants to go his own way and to be master of his destiny. He wants to put himself where God should be — at the center of things, to ignore his dependence and finiteness and assert his independence and self-sufficiency. He resists God. God knows too much, sees too much. Man does not want to be transparent to so powerful a Being. There is too much light for him to endure, light that leaves no secrets, that exposes deliberate deceptions, shameful contradictions, impulsive meannesses. Such fear does not arise from innocence — you force the mind of a child into an unnatural course if you teach him to be frightened of God. Nor does it arise from holiness — the saints when they pray address God with amazing confidence and boldness. It arises from sin. One of the first consequences of sin is that it awakens the conscience and makes it accuser and pursuer, judge and jury. Shakespeare compares it to "a thousand swords" and makes a villain say about his conscience, "I'll not meddle with it; it is a dangerous thing; it makes a man a coward; a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; he cannot swear, but it checks him." The Genesis story is a reminder that solemn, searching voices speak in the chamber of every man's soul. He may pretend that they are not there. He may endeavor to suppress them and by suppressing them may drive them down into his subconscious. Like Adam and Eve he is trying to hide from God.

Means of Escape

The attempt takes many forms. One of the commonest is the way of escape that the indulgence of the senses seems to offer. Not once or twice but time and time again "Eat, drink and be merry" has been the self-prescribed remedy for distress of soul. Alcohol is turned to as a friend, bringing anesthesia and euphoria, benumbing the consciousness of failure and guilt. Amusements — dinner parties, card parties, theaters — offer an opportunity of getting away from it all. A young woman said to an elderly friend, "I like reading" — she mentioned three or four best-selling novels — "but I find the Bible very dull." "My dear," the friend replied, "the other night I went to the movies. There was a glorious racket. Trains whizzed past, people escaped from windows, there was no end of a hue and cry; and I was excited and thrilled. When I came out it was a lovely night, with the moon and the stars shining bright above me; and I was not interested a bit." The reluctance to hear the deeper chord struck, the impulse to back away from the profounder thoughts and experiences that trouble the mind and pierce the conscience — what is it but the attempt to hide from God? Said Pascal, "The surest sign of godless man is that he is afraid to be by himself in a single room, alone."

There are some who hide from God in intellectual difficulties. They have been to college. Science has introduced them to a very different world from that of the Bible, a world where the sun stands still, where bushes burn but are not consumed, where dead men are brought to life again. There is so much about religion that seems to them obscurantist, medieval, incredible. No one should make light of those difficulties. They have got to be faced frankly and fully, as Dr. Fosdick faced them in his book, *The Modern Use of the Bible.* But those of us who spend a lot of time helping people to straighten out their intellectual problems now and again run into this sort of situation. A student will complain about the difficulty Christianity presents to his mind but will make no sustained attempt to explore what Christianity is or how problems for faith are met. Or he will reject Christianity without making sure that it is authentic Christianity he is rejecting, and not some caricature of it which any intelligent Christian would disown at once. Or if you answer his questions about Genesis he will switch to the subject of miracles, and from miracles to the divinity of Christ, then from the divinity of Christ to the faults and failings of the church and church members. After a while you have the impression that driven from one dugout he is taking refuge in another. Don't misunderstand me. Intellectual problems about religion are genuine. Anybody

who has thought seriously about things knows that Christian faith is not easy. But there are times when intellectual problems are an escape mechanism. The real problem is not intellectual but moral. It has to do with some form of selfishness or self-indulgence. God demands too much. The impulse is to evade him and his demands and to rationalize the evasion. Aldous Huxley now candidly admits that for himself and most of his contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness with its rejection of Christianity and the Christian ethic was an instrument of liberation. The liberation desired was from a system of morality. It was objected to because it interfered with their sexual freedom. There was one admirably simple method of confuting Christianity and supporters of Christianity and at the same time justifying themselves in their erotic revolt; they could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever. Hiding from God can be a sophisticated business.

More Sedative than Stimulant

That last remark prompts one more suggestion. Men and women can hide from God, or attempt to, in religion itself. Marx was not altogether wrong in saying that religion is the opium of the people. For the majority of Americans it is more of a sedative than a stimulant. Church membership can be an escape mechanism. The pew — and the pulpit — can be a shelter to hide in. Creeds can be made to do duty for conduct. Beliefs can be professed easily and readily but without any pains being taken to act on them. It won't be enough when the Judgment Day dawns to tell God that you were a church member.

Many and devious are the ways people take of hiding from God. None of them is of any avail. You need stout defenses against the devil; you need stouter against God. You may crowd your walls with sentries but there is one invasion you are powerless to withstand. This was Dostoyevsky's theme in *Crime and Punishment.* A man may think he has done with God, may smite all of God within himself, smite with disfiguring violence, but God gets through to him in the end. Browning, worlds apart from Dostoyevsky however you regard him, offers the same testimony. "Just when we are safest, there's a sunset touch, a fancy from a flower-bell, someone's death," and lo, He stands before us, blocking our path so that we cannot pass on till we have dealt with him. This is the universal experience. God is inescapable. Sooner or later, in life or in death, we must come face to face with him. Centuries ago a man asked: "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." And the thing Jesus tells us is that the God from whom we seek in our folly and sin to hide is our Father and that the reason why he follows us down the nights and days, and arches of the years, down the labyrinthine ways of our minds, and in the mist of tears and under runni laughter, the reason why He will not give us will not let us go, is that He longs to rescue from our waywardness and our wandering a bring us home.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If a man hear My voice and will open the door, I w come in to him, and will sup with him, and with Me."

Spoken by a Son

(Continued from page 13)

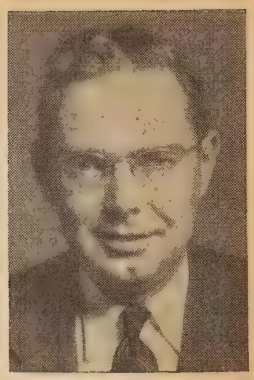
served condemnation of the Most High. Yet they contemplate the penalties that fell upon th Christ through no fault of his own, they reali that this was judgment in order to redemption; fo through his death, the purpose of men is tran formed. The message of this season is of th renewal of mankind, and the word of God reveale in Jesus Christ is a redemptive word.

God's word as recorded in Old and New Testa ments is self-consistent. It is the same God wh spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets wh in these last days has spoken to us by a Son. Chris is the Word of God incarnate. He is the embodi ment of the message that God would have me hear. It is a message of self-revelation. It is poten for righteousness, progressive in character, redemp tive in purpose. The great prophetic voice speak ing in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah says, "Th grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of ou God will stand forever." The prophet had hi choice of three different Hebrew words for "stand." The first is *amadh,* to stand in the sense of stan fast, endure. The picture is that of a wall standing solidly even though the earth should shake. It suggests permanence, endurance. But this is not the word the prophet used.

The second word that he could have used was *natsabh,* to stand in the sense of taking one's stand as a sentry takes his position. It suggests the idea of taking one's proper place. But this is not the word the prophet used.

The word the prophet did use is a third word, *qum* which means to stand, to rise, to stand up. It suggests that the word of God grows and is alive. The things of this world droop and fade. Like grass they wither and fall, but the word of our God does not droop down; it rises and grows, giving evidence of the vitality that is within it. So it is with the gospel of Christ who gave himself that men might be redeemed. As we proclaim our allegiance to him and demonstrate by act and word our unswerving devotion to his cause, so will his gospel be proclaimed ever more widely, and so will his church accomplish the mission to which he has ordained it. For the message of the church is to proclaim the word. And this word is that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself; and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

A Review-Sermon
Of "The Defiant Ones"



We Must All Be Saved Together

By Robert E. Luccock

WHERE is your brother?" In the myth of ancient times God asked this question of Cain. The question is ageless. For in the turmoil of this present time God demands an answer also from us: Where is your brother? We may try to avoid giving answer by throwing the question back at God: "How should I know? Am I my brother's keeper?" But God will not be put off. "What have you done to this man with whom you are bound in the bundle of life? For I have made you from one blood!"

A recent and remarkable motion picture reminds us through its vivid symbols that we are bound to be our brother's keeper, or we ourselves will die. "The Defiant Ones,"* written by Nathan Douglas and Harold Jocob Smith, is both a striking and a powerful film entirely apart from its symbolism. It is a rare motion picture that can speak with effect both as distinguished drama and in the communication of truth. This one does it with honors. But what makes it an unforgettable and shocking experience is the overwhelming truth that seizes us through the symbol of a chain. In the symbol of an unbreakable chain lies the truth that humanity is bound together for better or worse. We must all be saved together or none of us shall be saved at all.

The Story

John "Joker" Jackson, a white man, and Noah "Cully" Cullen, a Negro, escape from a southern chain gang when the truck carrying prisoners in which they are riding crashes and overturns in the night. These two men, detesting each other with bitterness and hate, are nevertheless linked together by a massive four-foot chain around their wrists. Making off into the wilderness of forest and swamp like hunted animals, as soon as it is day they try to smash the chain. It cannot be broken. So, despising each other with venomous hatred, they must travel together. In a crackling conversation at the very beginning of their adventure they discover that they are bound to be each other's keepers.

Joker says, "We're going south." Cully refuses: "Even if we got this chain off, what chance would I have, a strange black man in a white man's town. Uh-uh — north is up that way and that's the way we're going." "What do you mean?" bawls the white man, "I'm not married to you." "Oh yes you are married to me, all right. And this chain is the wedding band. Either we go north together or we go back into prison."

So they push on, knowing that in a few hours on their trail will be a posse of blood hounds, killer dogs, and armed troopers, some of whom would just as soon hunt men as though they were rabbits. Trying to ford the swift current of a river, they are swept downstream in rapids and whirlpools where by no more than the margin of one or two breaths they escape drowning. At the collapsing end of his strength Joker pulls Cullen onto the bank. He thanks John for pulling him out, but the white man explodes, "I didn't pull you out; I kept you from pulling me in."

Later, running through some big excavation in a drenching rain, they have to dive into a gully to avoid discovery by a man driving a mule wagon. Where they have landed is a miry clay pit fifteen feet deep, whose vertical sides of slimy clay are more slippery than ice. Again and again they assault the walls of the pit only to fall back. They are able finally to climb out by having Jackson stand on Cullen's shoulders to reach and haul himself over the rim to an anchored post, and then drag the heavy Negro out after him. Completely exhausted, and the white man's wrist badly damaged, they cannot rest. And their hate continues. Joker irritates Cully by calling him *nigger* and *boy*. "Don't call me boy," he shouts; and, "If you call me nigger again, I'll kill you."

It turns out that Cullen is in the penitentiary for assault and battery with intent to kill. All his life, even while being shoved and pulled around, he had tried to "be nice" to white folk, always ready to say, "Yes sir, boss. No sir boss." One day a man came with a gun to take his home away because he hadn't paid the note. "And all of a sudden," he says, "there was nothing more to say." He attacked the man and would have killed him

* United Artists; Stanley Kramer, producer-director.

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— but he was stopped by others. Against this whole rotten world of unfair disadvantage this Negro is in violent, criminal protest. To all of this Jackson says, "All right, all right, I didn't make the rules." "No," says the Negro, "but you've lived by them all your life." Then in one wish that breaks through from the colored man's heart, Cullen says, "I've always dreamed, if I could just get away some place where folks wasn't afraid." Isn't that the hope of all men, where the Negro would not be afraid for his rights and the white man would not be afraid for his place?

Jackson is in the chain gang for stealing. He got tired of being a little man, and having to say "thank you" all the time: "Thank you, thank you, thank you." He hates the words! He dreams of being not a little maker, but a big taker — a taker so big he wouldn't get caught. He dreamed of being a big "Charley Potatoes." But he ended up with a chain on his wrist and a soul full of poison.

The Symbol

The further we go in the unfolding of this story the stronger grows the feeling that Jackson and Cullen are not just two convicts chained together. They are the human race — chained together. To be saved, or to die together. It is not just two men, but humanity that we see caught in the raging rapids of storm aad strife, swirled down over rocks that can kill. It is not just two men, but the whole human race that we see chained together trying desperately to climb out of the miry pit of hatred, suspicion and evil into which we have fallen. Neither the white man nor the black can make it out of the pit of the world's evil without the other! In that tremendous scene that leaves you out of breath in the theater as you struggle against the side of the pit with these men, you see the white man stand on the colored man's back and reach for freedom. The white man *has stood* on the Negro's back. And one way or the other now, they must support and lift each other. But the man who is still in the pit must be pulled out. For when we reach the rim of the pit God will say to us, "Where is your brother?" You are bound to your brother — to be his keeper!

The two men are caught in the second night of their escape, trapped while trying to steal from the company store of a turpentine mill settlement. The crowd is about to lynch them, but one who is called Big Sam shames the mob in their cowardly blood lust, and then secretly cuts the men loose. Why? The answer is imprinted for life on his wrist in the marks of a chain. He was once in a chain gang. He has been bound where now they are bound. Only one who bears the scars of his own sin and the world's evil can understand deeply what it means to be human and to be hunted — hunted both by his own past and the violence that cruel men would inflict. Big Sam will not break their chain (for these men are criminals and they are dangerous), but he will not stand by to see them destroyed without mercy.

On the third day of their flight the men come upon a farm where a mother and her eleven-year-old boy live alone, the husband and father havi deserted them months before. In this lone cabin the men finally break the chain. But th find themselves too weak (and John too sick) journey farther that day. They spend the nig in the cabin, asleep and at each other's merc The next morning before Cully is awake, th woman persuades John to escape with her in h car. It is his great chance for freedom, and h chance to leave behind the lonely intolerabl existence of her abandonment. The Negro find them and overhears their talk. "So you've got all figured out," he says. "You go with her an leave me to the dogs."

"You'll have a better chance alone, Cully, Joker tells him. Then the girl tells him how train goes north along the ridge across the swamp He can jump the train easy there and get away t his freedom. She packs him some food. As h steps to the door the two men face each othe without words in one moment of mutual regard They speak, only to say, "So long."

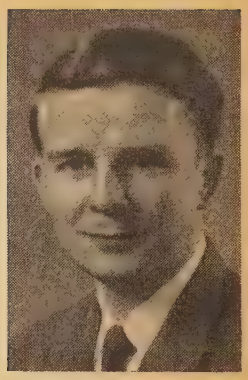
The Imperative

But it turns out rather soon that this woman has betrayed Cullen. To conceal her escape with John from discovery she has sent the Negro into a vast swamp of quicksand. She laughs to the white man when she says, "He'll never get caught. He'll never make it alive out of the quicksand." Rage sweeps over Jackson at this deception; he flings her aside and tears off into the swamp after the fleeing Negro. Although the steel chain that once bound them has been loosened, the white man cannot betray the Negro who does not have an equal chance to escape. It is as though even at this last extremity they could not be saved alone. Bleeding from the gun wound inflicted by the little boy who shot him when he hurled his mother aside, Jackson storms through the swamp calling for Cullen. One feels imperative truth speaking out of this scene: *No* race to be condemned to the swamps of blighted living in miserable dwellings and wretched haunts from which no escape is possible; *No* people to be cast aside to the quicksands of separated, isolated schools, churches, social life; *No* human beings abandoned to be prey to hunger, or ruthless capture by men of violence; *No* one to be betrayed by lust or hate or fear, whether Jews in Atlanta, or the miserable poor of shanty town, Johannesburg, or those appalling masses of colored Asians, or Negro children in Little Rock, or the minorities who find no decent place to live in New Haven. Where are our brothers? We are *bound,* to be their keepers!

Jackson finds Cully in the swamp. They make a desperate run for the train. If you have not seen the picture I will not reveal what happens in those last two minutes, except to say that they accept each other at last. But there is one great scene here where the camera shows just the black hand reaching for the white hand in the overwhelming effort of escape. There is no chain now, except the chain of respect and the bond of brotherhood that has

(Continued on page 21)

We Cannot Really Start Anew
Until We Become New



A Prisoner of Love

By John S. Wood

Too weak to break the chains that bind me,
I need no shackles to remind me,
I'm just a prisoner of love.*

YOU ALL know the feeling. There is not a one of us that has not, at some time or other, felt pressured and hemmed in by circumstances beyond his control.

What can you do when exam time rolls around and there are just so many hours left and just so much material yet to be crammed into that tired little noggin? What can you do when you realize you have over committed yourself to the point where the jobs and activities you've taken on demand more than either clock or calendar or good health will allow? Most of us are pretty adept at juggling — keeping a number of pins in the air at the same time. But when the pins all seem to fall at once, when the deadlines pile up back to back, then what can we do?

Wistfully, we may wish for more time. "If only I had another week to study this geometry, I know I'd come through O.K." "If only the party was *next* Saturday, I could really plan the decorations I'm responsible for." "If only we didn't have to do such and such and such, the team could really be in shape for the big game."

Despairingly, we may wish it were all over. "Oh how I'd like it to be next week, then all this paper-writing and studying would be over again for a while." "If only we can make it through this next game, we'll be O.K." "After the Prom is over, we'll have time to . . . ." But, whom are we kidding? We know we can neither stop the clock nor speed it up. Hooked, that's what we are, and the only thing to do is to see it through somehow.

When we're honest with ourselves, we know it's not just exams and work and things that trap us. We've all lived long enough to have acquired our own peculiar set of mannerisms and attitudes and habits that even we ourselves dislike. The "shake" comes in the recognition that these habits and attitudes are just enough a part of us, bring just enough security and satisfaction to us, that loosing them is a lot more like wiggling out of a tight, wet bathing suit than slipping out of a pair of loose loafers. Again, we're hooked.

Or perhaps you will call to mind situations with your family or your friends where you could almost see what was coming as if you had "sneak previewed" the story before. And there you were, hearing things being said, hearing yourself say some of them; seeing things being done, seeing, but almost not feeling yourself doing some of them; and then, POW! — the explosion you knew was coming all along!

I suppose we've all had experiences enough at feeling trapped in ways like these to appreciate the story popular among teen-agers in the mid-west. Two skeletons are hanging in a closet. One turns to the other and says: "You know, if we had any guts, we'd get out of here."

But how indeed does one "get out" when he can't tamper with time and space? Some have tried to work a deal; you know, the "I'd give my right arm" theory. Perhaps the most incisive and dramatic study of this approach is found in Goethe's legend of Faust translated into operatic form by Charles Gounod. Faust is a venerable scholar. But he has spent years in seeking the answer to the riddle of life which has eluded him. In weariness and despair he is all but ready to seek death when he enters into a deal with Mephistopheles. He trades his future, his eternity, for some pleasure and joy here and now. Lots of people try that and sooner or later they all come, with Faust, to find that it's a bad deal, a bum steer, a rooking.

Some others have just decided there is no way out, "no exit." In bitterness and frustration with their lot they come to feel that life itself is meaningless, a game played by fools. They have turned on their friends, on their family, on society, and striking out in blind rage seek only to hurt, to sear, to destroy. Such is the approach of the "angry young men" of our day exemplified in a play like "Look Back in Anger," now overwhelming audiences on Broadway with its explosions of fury and invective.

One can appreciate the feelings and moods and circumstances that drive people to either of these

* "A Prisoner of Love" by Leo Robin, Clarence Gaskill and Russ Columbo (New York: Mayfair, 1931).

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extremes. But one could also wish they might have been able to find meaning and relevance and possibility in still another way tied up somehow in a phrase like "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."

That's a nice catchy phrase. But what's it all about? Truth? What truth? Free? From what and to what?

Most obviously, perhaps, free from all the old way of life that got us into our little traps to begin with. Free to start afresh without the millstone of memory around our necks to haunt us with reminders and habits of past mistakes, stacking the cards against us so we can never get a fair deal and a chance to prove ourselves. To start anew — that's why there's promise in a new school term, or a new group of friends, a new job, or a "happy new year."

But we don't have to go very far into the new year or the new term before we begin to discover that the old us is still there pretty much as before. And there's the rub. We can't really start anew until we ourselves are somehow new. You know, it just might be there's something in the relationship between words like "fresh start," "new beginnings," "newness of life," "renewal" and "new birth."

Something to Happen

Free from the old, freed for the new because of a truth, a truth about ourselves! And what is that truth? Well, somewhere in the recognition that *we* need to be made new before life can be very new for us there lies also the recognition that we need to be *made* new. We sense something not of our own doing — something to happen to us in the realm of making, of creation. In other words, the truth about ourselves that sets us free is the truth that we are made, we are created, in short, we are sons of God.

Now, while I feel the logic of this follows as the night does the day, I wouldn't expect you to assent to it as a neat exercise of logic or even of theo-logic or theology if you will. When you really come to it, the statement "the truth that you are sons of God shall set you free to newness of life" is an affirmation of faith.

Faith is a much abused, wrongly used, and usually misunderstood word. During this week we are going to try to see how it applies to many different facets of our life. But, what is this thing called faith?

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews proclaims it in those very familiar words as "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things unseen" and then proceeds to call a long roll of those who "lived by faith."

Read that chapter carefully and you may be amazed at what you find or do not find there. The chapter suggests, for instance, that while we may give expression to our faith or celebrate our faith through symbolic acts, through worship and ritual and religious practice, these are not faith but rather a response to it. It suggests that while certain teachings or beliefs or creeds may be drawn from the faith which help to explain the fai even these are but reflections of the faith. It s gests that rules of conduct and modes of behav are not the faith, but again, possible responses to

Faith then is neither a list of "do's" or "don't nor a set of creeds and teachings nor a system worship and praise. All these things and actio may be helpful ways of expressing a faith, b faith itself is an attitude. All the long roll the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and indeed the whole Bible, is a roll of men and women wh *trusted* God. More than trusted, they *surrender* their fate, their will, their lives; they risked a on the belief that God was sure and loving an unfailing. That was their act of faith, not anythin they did or said or believed as a result of or in e pression of that act of trust and surrender.

Roll Call

Not too long ago, a man by the name of Gavi James M., Lieutenant General, United Stat Army, made headlines with his decision to resig from the active service. He had come to the pla where he felt he could do more good for the arm from the outside. He was willing to give up h position, risk his prestige, end his career. Why Because more important to him than position prestige or career were things he believed in an to which he had long ago dedicated his life.

Americans of both parties have been thrille twice within these years as in somewhat paralle circumstances Presidents Roosevelt and Eisenhow er have both cast aside concern for personal healt and well-being and, accepting the grave risks, pro ceeded with their plans to attend and give leader ship at important international gatherings.

Millions of listeners were deeply moved b last fall's "See It Now" presentation called "A Lady From Philadelphia" as they watched a grea and selfless artist move about the world, winning friends and sharing love wherever she went.

Perhaps you recall the scene where Miss Marian Anderson is being interviewed in India by a radio commentator. She is asked why in conversation she always says *"we* would like to present" or *"we* thought" and never *"I* have come to." In what was perhaps the most moving and truly religious moment on American television in a whole season, Miss Anderson proceeded to explain how anything she was able to do was the result of the efforts of so many — her teachers, her manager, her pianist, and others — that it seemed always more befitting to speak of "we" since the "I" alone can do so little.

Free and Not Free

All of these stories have a common thread. They are expressions of faith. On different levels, perhaps, but Gavin and Eisenhower and Roosevelt were, in their own ways and their own situations, exhibiting the courage, the determination, the trust, the surrender of a Martin Luther: "Here I stand, I can do no other." And as Miss Anderson spoke of the self alone being powerless and only finding its purpose as others work through it one

could hear the undertones of a grizzled veteran like St. Paul proclaiming: "I, Paul, a prisoner of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Nevertheless it is not I, but Christ who worketh in me. . . ."

You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. Free — and yet not free. Free the way the star quarterback is free to use his skills and abilities and not free in that he is always dependent on the team to back him up, to make the openings in which he can be free.

Free the way the second tenor or first soprano is free to use a talent and a gift, but not free in that the other voices too are needed to provide the harmonies and contrasts out of which the soloists can raise their full beauty.

Free the way the second lead or walk-on-maid is free to put all the life possible into those lines and actions, and yet not free in the dependence upon cast, stagehands, scenery, costumes and audience to give their parts depth and impact.

Free as a Marian Anderson, free in the knowledge that others make her performance possible. Free as a Paul, free in the admission of a debt to both the Greeks and the barbarians, the wise and the foolish. Free as a Martin Luther, free in the knowledge that "I can do no other."

Mysterious Love

A while back I asked: "What is this thing called faith? I might better have used the words of an old song and said: "What is this thing called love?" For the root of all faith is the mysterious love of God which holds nothing back and makes any response less than love in return, less than trust, less than surrender a blasphemy and ridicule.

Men of faith, says Hebrews, are men who trust in the Lord, men who surrender to his will. Men of faith, says Paul, are men who are captured by God's love and can only respond in love.

Topping the best seller lists for over six months was James Gould Cozzens' novel *By Love Possessed.* That's it in a nutshell. Faith is an attitude of trust, of surrender, of being possessed. It is a love for God responding to his love which knows no bounds. To have faith is indeed to become "by love possessed," "a prisoner of love" — that love of God which will never let you go.

Saved Together

(Continued from page 18)

been forged between these men in the crisis of their necessity. This is the day for which we hope and work and pray, a day when God says, "Where is your brother?" and we answer, "We are here, Lord, bound, by our humanity, to be each other's keepers. Because we are bound also to Him who came to proclaim release to the captives, and to set at liberty those who are oppressed."

Edge of Time

(Continued from page 5)

you do not read the riddles out by reading God in. Whoever learns from looking up and looking back will gird up his loins when he turns around — or as the Revised Standard Version would have it, will tighten his belt!

That does not seem to have come as clear by any means as it should have come by this time in the history of God's dealing with his people. Still in prayers and in sermons we are promised more than he ever has been able on his own terms to manage. And it makes no sense. It makes no sense even when we do it blatantly enough in our churches to guarantee standing room only. On a recent Saturday morning *The New York Times* announced that one visiting divine would preach the next day on "Getting What You Want." Maybe he lampooned it. I don't know. It is incredible that anybody should seriously set about hawking such a luxury item, as if civilization had nothing more the matter with it than a bad case of the sniffles! George Jean Nathan once remarked of a certain actress that she was the only Camille he had ever seen who had died of catarrh! It is not so much a question now of getting what we want as it is a question of finding out how to want what we get! To get God may mean to get hurt! You may have to limp into the future when it happens. Jacob did.

There is that kind of double talk running all through the Bible. Men cannot live without God, but who can live with him? These chapters of Samuel I dare say were not intended to be humorous; but they are. They are the story of how thoroughly embarrassed the Philistines were once they had actually laid their hands on the ark of the covenant. Wherever they put it down a plague broke out, and all the lords of the people said, "What shall we do with it?" It was too "hot" for anybody to hold on to! From city to city they moved it: three times, and every time the local politicians wanted to know, "How shall we get rid of it?" — until they sent it back where it came from; and even there it stirred up trouble!

Holiness does just that in our kind of world. When God quits having you on his hands and you start having him on yours, you will find out how difficult he is! Instead of letting you count your many blessings, he will begin asking you questions about what you are going to do with them! That is how you will know he is somewhere in the neighborhood! As Paul Lehman once suggested, the elect in God's Kingdom are not the elite: we cannot afford to get our sociology and our theology mixed up! The elect are the uneasy ones, with the broken crust!

The scribes and Pharisees I suppose never came so near the Kingdom as on that day when they had taken a woman in adultery. Never had they felt so secure — that is the time to look out — and

never were they less so! They had dressed up for the occasion in all the piety they could find, whole layers of it: otherwise they could never have invented such exquisite torture as this, jerking her out into the light of day and flinging her down there in the temple court. She could not look at anybody: her very being alive must have hurt! And Jesus did not say anything. How could he? He stooped and wrote with his finger on the ground. What else was there to do in the presence of that grim outrage, that enormous iniquity which these good men had manufactured! Then he straightened himself for as long as he could stand their leering faces and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And after that he stooped again. I think never was the invitation into the Kingdom of God put in such heartbreaking terms. And they who heard it went out. It is the most hopeful thing ever written of them in the gospel. They went out one by one, beginning at the eldest: maybe because the years had worn their crust a little thinner; as I grow older I like to think that. Anyhow they went out, as you and I have to go out from before him, and every man, one by one, on God's bare mercy, defenseless and alone! When that comes home to you, he is not far away. In any event, you will not just go on smiling, will you, as you read him into the future?

And yet this we may know: that through it all he means intensely, and he means good. Can we get that into the record too and keep it there against the odds, as Samuel did? "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." And there in front of him to look forward to was nothing, it would appear, but more of the same that lay behind him: a little peace perhaps, but still those scattered tribes in a land of promise where the promise had not yet come true! How on earth could anybody be sure it would? A thousand years later Paul got it into the record again, the God who in all things works together for good with them that love him — in stripes and rods and stones and shipwreck!

How could he be so sure? Why *shouldn't* he be sure? "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Why? Because he was a man now "scoured on the side facing eternity"! He had been thrown out of what God had done into what God was doing! The long past of all the long centuries, Israel's past, was his past; but now that one event toward which it had been moving had become his present, and with it the very deliverance from bondage which he had once thought he was only remembering! Everything which through those centuries had made God God and kept him God had for Paul broken into the world again!

Once you understand that you will understand why the stripes and the rods and the stones have so little to do with it. What if the end itself should be the kind of completion "which at the beginning would have seemed the ruin"? "Safe" and danger" have got them now a different mean ing. Who wants to use religion any longer in orde to stockpile a few more promises at a discoun Who's keeping books? Whatever happens, let happen! Maybe we know the score well enough a last to play it by ear!

On a memorable evening not too long ag Toscanini walked over to the podium for his fina concert. He was over eighty, and they had built slender railing for him. He touched it lightl with the fingers of one hand. Then he raised hi baton. A student of mine was there and wrote o it: of how the orchestra seemed to steal softly a one man into the first quiet movement of th great symphony; and of how after a while, as th volume grew, first one and then another lifted hi eyes from the notes and fastened them on th maestro there, with the wistful little smile on his lips. And all the music they had in them swept up toward that face!

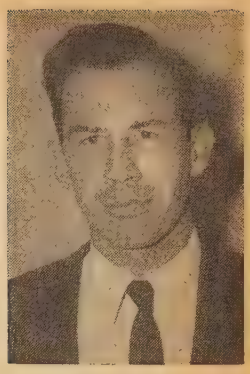
Prayer

ETERNAL God, who hast folded back the black mantle of the night to clothe us in the glory of the day, make us glad with the brightness of hope. We have taken time out this day to renew our strength and refresh our souls. Shutting out the voices of the world to listen to thee, we seek to be lifted above the strife and evil of our day. Believing in thy power to overcome temptation, sorrow and difficulty of any kind, we seek thy sustaining grace. Grant unto us through thy love a renewed faith.

We ask thy blessing upon our loved ones, friends and neighbors, both near and far. We thank thee for the richness that they have contributed to our world and to our lives. As the day would be incomplete without the night, so we know that our lives would be empty without friends. We thank thee for thy example of true and rich friendship in Jesus Christ. Inspire us to become more worthy of that friendship. Open our eyes wider to the needs of others regardless of their color, religious faith or nationality. Help us to hear the bitter ballad of the slums as well as the symphony of the seasons' beauty.

We pray for a pattern of consistency in our relations with others and with thee. "Teach us how to maintain life on an even keel, that with a balanced life of faith and trust in thee, and kindness and love towards each other, we shall not be at one moment up in the sky and at the next at the bottom of a well." We confess our need for this consistency because there is no alternative in troubled times such as ours but to live by thy divine guidance and power. Hear our prayer, O Lord. In the Master's name we pray. Amen. — *Jack F. Belton, Wesley Foundation at the First Methodist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.*

Without Love, There Is No Home—
Only Husks, Hogpens and Broken Lives



"All My Sons"

By Robert E. McBride

ONE of the central figures in a postwar drama *All My Sons** is modestly prosperous and self-contained Joe Keller. Joe is a businessman and father who has played loosely with the moral law and whose chickens finally come home to roost. The denouement is reached when Joe, grasping a letter from a son in the South Pacific (who has taken his life rather than face the ignominy of his father's crime which cost the lives of his fellow pilots), says in a haltingly but comprehending fashion: "Sure, he was my son, but I think to him, they were all my sons. And I guess they were . . . I guess they were . . ."

This drama of Arthur Miller's parallels a story Jesus told of another man who came to himself in the midst of the wreckage and tragedy which the sin of his life had created. The Prodigal Son is the account of a boy who in many respects is typical of our own age and of each of us. He has all that he needs in the way of material ends — a fine home, business security, clothes, friends. But he is also a youth who is beset with a driving sense of adventure, a longing to see what the great wide world is all about, to stand upon his own feet. It is not so much that he dislikes his father or his home, but that he is a youth.

And we ought not to criticize him for this. Indeed, one of the reasons why this story has become precious to so many of us is that it symbolizes the inner history of our own lives. Who of us does not remember those days when we too "champed at the bit," bitterly critical of the wisdom of home? Perhaps we even stamped out in anger, risking disinheritance, severing our ties as did this lad.

The Drive to Go Out

The drive to go out, to become our own masters psychologically, is one of the most important and creative drives in human life. It is a reservoir of freedom and individuality which has become for man historically his most precious achievement. Some of the most pathetic people of our own generation are those whom Rolo May describes as not having the power to cut their psychological umbilical cords to mother or father — husbands who cannot really love their wives because the image of mother still controls their lives, wives who cannot love their husbands because the shadow of father still dominates them. One sees the tragedy of many young couples whose happiness is destroyed by well-meaning, loving but badly misled parents who do not realize the wreckage they create.

Often it is the continuing dominance of parental ambitions, ideals, hopes and aspirations which function like braces upon the mind and personality of youth, so that he dares not recognize his own desires or acknowledge his own thoughts — a type of thought control, of brain washing which robs him of everything that he is or hopes to be. Children are plastic in their early years, so full of creativity and potentiality — and so lacking in prejudice and those attitudes of calculated egocentrism which mark their parents' lives. But how quickly we mold them to think as we have thought, to hate as we have hated, to love what we love.

What Did Jesus Mean?

The question that bothers is what did Jesus really intend to imply in the story of the Prodigal. Did Jesus really mean that the condemnation of God falls upon him who dares to go out? Did he mean that a youth ought not to question the dictates of his father, that he has no right to go out on such a search?

This is one way of interpreting the story but I cannot believe Jesus really meant that youth have no right to probe the big problems of life, to raise the ultimate questions that rise from the depths of their own souls. It is so characteristic of us parents that we answer the little questions of young people and avoid their big ones. We suspect their motives when they seek answers that exceed our intelligence or our insight, answers we have never had the curiosity or the courage to ask for persistently ourselves.

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* Arthur Miller (New York: Reynal & Co., 1947).

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The mark of a really great mind is the kind of question it can ask, not the answer it can give. The fact that many of us have never struggled intensely in the deep dark valley of doubt, fear and uncertainty in our own spiritual lives may be a mark of intellectual cowardice or spiritual timidity as much as it may be a mark of faith. And so we live out our lives in mediocrity and superficial piety. We cannot speak to youth in our homes or our Sunday school classes because we cannot face life as candidly as do they. We may appear to be giants but we cannot long hide from them that we are really "spiritual Milquetoasts" who survive upon the pious platitudes and pat answers of others.

The Vinegar of Rebellion

On the other hand there are those tragic figures of our day who seem to exist only upon the vinegar of rebellion. They are those men in the shop or office who seem to thrive upon tearing down the ideas and plans of others, getting an almost sadistic thrill out of successfully thwarting someone — people who can give themselves strength only by tearing the heart out of another. They are the young people who roam our city streets, hurling curses at passers-by, thwarting the law at every corner, and facing our judges insolently and unrepentantly — youth who can find themselves only in hatred and aggression.

Yet the story of this prodigal reaches a surprising climax, for the proclamation of Jesus is that he came to himself! And this in spite of the rupture he had caused. On the wings of his rebellion he had found himself as he really was, a rebel without a cause.

What a precious discovery he had made. What a pearl of great price he has found. How many of us would not sell all that we have if we too could come to see ourselves as we really are, to know our weaknesses or critical need, the cause of our estrangement from God, to recognize the pretentiousness of our lives? For only in this state do we find God. No man or woman finds God until he begins with the fact of his own need, his own pride, his own pretentions and discovers that he too is a sinner. To accept ourselves as sinners is the one ultimate prerequisite to our acceptance as sons.

One Thing Necessary

Is this then all that Jesus was saying? Not that we have no right to go out, to rebel, to seek to stand on our own two feet — these are written into our very souls as human beings — but that rebellion is not an end in itself and that we who live our lives in this fashion feed only upon the husks? Was he not saying more that the power and love of God is such that God can use even this to work his will? We cannot live our lives in fighting God, but we can lose them that way. Until we find something to stand on, something to rest our faith upon and give ourselves to, we have nothing to live for.

So the prodigal returns — repentant, hungry in body and soul for bread, for love, for fellowship, for purpose, for direction — back to the place from whence he has come. For one who has known real love and real affection once in life can never be the same. Here is the one mistake we parents dare not make — to fail to love. Many things a child can have — bicycles, comic books, a savings account, a two-gun holster — but one thing he must have — love. It is the cord of sincere and binding oneness that once given can never be retracted. Without it there is no home, no forgiveness — only hogpens and husks and broken lives.

The "Perfect" Son

Let us look at the elder brother for a moment for the story closes with him as one of the principal actors. He is the epitome of religiosity and piousness, the perfect son who has stayed home every day the prodigal was wasting his substance. He has not missed a Sunday service or a prayer meeting, ignored an offering plate or failed a daily prayer; he is the precise and devoted son upon whom the church has depended for strength through the centuries.

And yet, tragically, there is no word from Jesus that this son ever came to himself! His only reaction is anger, for the father has restored a rebel, a doubter, a turncoat! Could it be that in the midst of his righteousness he has not discovered what real love is? Love misses the conventional boundaries so often. It is so hard for one who really loves another to express that love in terms of social convention and expectancy; it leads one to sit by an open door with a yearning eye upon the lane, and to weep with joy when he might have said, "I told you so!"

The sin of the elder son is that of so many of us "good people," we who never recognize in our pride and self-concern, in the smugness and complacency of our righteousness that it is possible too that we are lost. Could it be that we are people who never find ourselves because we never realize that we are lost?

Self-Discovery

In the final analysis Jesus was saying two thousand years ago what Joe Keller was saying in the midst of his self-discovery — that we are all sons of God and that each of us is lost until we acknowledge ourselves estranged from God and therefore in need. We who so fervently seek to serve the church devotedly and earnestly become lost in self-righteousness. Our desire for churchmanship can easily become lost in ecclesiasticism, our parental love deteriorate into paternalism. We need to know that being lost is not a matter of special location — whether we are at home, at church or in the pigsty. It can and does happen any place, anywhere, to anybody when life loses its love focus. We have arrived in an ultimate sense when we know that we are all *His* sons and — until we come to ourselves — prodigals away from home.

Loving Enough to Be Heard,
Learned Enough to Be Clear

"Sound Off, Christians!"

By David A. Redding

SILENCE, of course, can be golden. It may mean rest, or as Booth Tarkington used to say, it could reflect a vacuum or signify false teeth. Here, however, we wish to bring its shadow-side into focus. Silence can also mean death, and what is more to the point we are anxious to make, it can *bring* death. Silence is no blackguard. Many today, if not most, are unconsciously dying to hear the "still, small voice." The "Silent Night" could potentially shed more glory on the noisy neighborhood of our life than almost anything we could name, but silence can also send ruin down upon us too, and it is this secret and serpentine side to which we now turn our thought.

I

Aldous Huxley proceeds to prosecute the general criminal activity of silence with these words:

> The greatest triumphs of propaganda have been accomplished not by doing something but by refraining from doing. Great is truth, but still greater from a practical point of view is silence about truth. By simply not mentioning certain subjects, by lowering what Mr. Churchill calls an "iron curtain" between the masses and such facts or arguments as the local political bosses regard as undesirable, totalitarian propagandists have influenced opinion much more effectively than they could have done by the most eloquent denunciations, the most compelling of logical rebuttals.*

This introduces our case against silence. Here is a peril behind the innocent appearance of the "buttoned lip." In fact as one looks up the record of "keeping mum," he discovers an extensive "blackground." One finds that silence has provided more devastating opposition to truth than the noisiest falsehood.

It becomes clear that as long as truth can fight foul play, freely and openly, there is nothing to fear. Vice and virtue soon show their colors in the light. The treacherous opponent is the dark and sinister quiet. It is silence that stops truth, smothers it like a wet blanket. We hold it guilty here of a grave crime.

II

And more often than not silence has infiltrated as a fifth column worker. Iron curtains have been drawn by coercion, but we need to be more critical of those drawn, or never pulled at least, within the ranks of truth — when the truth is not stopped by steel, but rather by a decent looking and deadly acting "hospital quiet" established by the management inside. The most heinous crime silence commits is not by the Soviets, but among those who have tiptoed in under the shadow of the saints. It is in the land of the free where silence is not barred from being broken, but where it is tongue-tied, that we make our strongest accusation.

Using stupor, silence says: "Don't go to the polls. Don't use the right of free speech. Keep your democratic vocal chords 'at rest.' Quit talking about the Father of your country or the one who preserved the Union." The result: The polling booth, grown obsolete, is removed. The right to free speech, unused, is restricted. The heroes of our history, unheard, are forgotten. And our adventure begun within these colonies will have died, not by any outward opposition, but simply because of lockjaw.

The starry side of men can be squelched with surer finesse by saying nothing good than by scandalizing them. How many Socrates have had to drink hemlock, how frequently good has been taken to the block, not so much because the mob cried "Crucify him, crucify him" as because the disciples said nothing. Staying still about something that should have been said has sent more evil upon great men and their causes than those few times when truth triumphed because someone pocketed his veto.

III

Now, as we turn to our faith, we most naturally nail down shallow speech as the first enemy sighted. Christianity is commonly considered today as having all but "talked itself to death." We popularly accuse our ancestors of having preached us right out of their philosophy. And in too many quarters the Christian movement is realistically read as having trumpeted, pulpited, or soap-boxed itself hoarse. Thus excused, men have "beat a retreat" to another absurd extreme — keeping an uneasy quiet about the sacred matters and shamefacedly defending it as good taste. Thinking of those who have noised the news abroad insensitively, they have tried to reassure themselves of the good sense of cutting out all Christian speech.

Many ministers have tried hard from their pulpits to expose the inadequacy of "words, words, words," as well as to give notice of their frequent prostitution in the arms of hypocrisy. They have hoped to make clear, at least, that words are many times masquerading — all too often marshaled to serve as deceptive imposters.

Surely all of us are well aware that not only can Christianity not run on wind alone, but also talk has done much that has told against the cause. The condition of Christianity could be greatly improved if some would save their breath. And whatever else we may want to say, Christianity "on the sleeve" or "off the cuff" is out. We would be far better off without any bargain window and any cheap auctioneering of what should be a sacred trust. But it may well be worth considering whether we have learned this lesson too well, particularly in the context of Mr. Huxley's shattering condemnation of silence.

IV

For while some of us may have learned well the lesson taught at His trial, where, when he was condemned "He opened not his mouth," we may not be aware of the disastrous consequences of the universal application of this instruction — and may have forgotten some major assignments he made on other days.

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* Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World,* Forward to Second Edition (New York: Harper & Brothers) used by permission.

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One of William Cooper Proctor's letters dated in the 1920's speaks of an evening when a handful of men in Glendale got together to talk seriously about their Christian life. At the close of that session, late at night, one young man, apparently spiritually stimulated by the experience, observed that it was the only time, so far as he knew that a group of men had gathered together for that purpose in Glendale. Well, of course, there were and have been others, but his reaction and the fact that Mr. Proctor drew attention to his remark point up something serious in a country which once conversed so freely and fondly in the Christian tongue. We are drawn up short by the symbolic fact that the word "holy day" has now become "holiday" and the once "God be with you" since contracted to a mere "goodby."

Certainly a live Christian faith cannot flourish without its being intelligently called to mind and ably adapted to our own souls by a contemporary companionship of kindred minds. The name of Christ should not too easily be on the tip of the tongue, but if one is Christian it will always be at the forefront of his mind and so quite inevitably will flow into his phrases, a most natural resource for the coinage of his words. Quite frankly if it does not pass the lips, it cannot cross another's mind, and afterwhile will not be able to make it through the overgrowth of one's own. If in reading the personal letters of the man just mentioned we never came across a Christian reference of any kind, the most careful scholarship would allow us to question the depth of his Christian devotion, just as too much spiritual palaver in the wrong way and the improper place would lead us to suspect his sincerity.

Someone might be saying now that while silence could do this to something else, it could not stop religion. For after all, the drive for devotion in man like the sexual drive is much too deep to disappear for lack of talk. But the point is that while religion and sex would go on, silence can sell out the Christian religion or the Christian view toward sex. In the wake of an inarticulate Christian faith, men would, as they frequently do, turn to some other faith to fulfill their religious needs — success, work, family, or self, become the gods of those to whom Christianity has become a dead tongue. Just as surely as someone would pick up his attitude toward sex from the back alley or from Freud, if the Christian concept were cloaked long enough by the silent treatment, so he would subpoena some idol to serve in Christ's stead at the head of his life.

One thinks a moment of what is happening to marriage. Where the Christian view is kept from frequent expression, Christian marriage makes its exit. Now divorce might be the best answer for a mistake, and conceivably some Christian could make several such agonizing blunders. But beneath the silent shadow of a whispering faith there are already places in this country where marriage as a sacrament has been forgotten.

V

Christian conversation is not nearly so deadly as commonly supposed. For we cannot talk too much about what is great or what is good. These matters provide the most fascinating and durable subjects for anyone who cares to think above a subhuman level. One can never be crowded with too much Christian conversation. To ask each other the meaning of this moment, this matter in hand, to inquire of and with each other how God is related to what we are doing and saying, provides the field for our most exciting communication. The thing we can't stand, or bores us to tears, is the abnormally inane presentation.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, one of the most fascinating conversationalists who ever lived, asked Charles Lamb if he had ever heard him preach. Lamb replied that he had never heard Coleridge do anything else. That is not an insult; if a sensitive man like Coleridge was genuinely enthusiastic about his most highly cherished conclusions, he would be at his richest best expressing them. Someone is boring only when he is rattling around in the verbal catacombs of some dead doctrine, parroting phrases about which he no longer retains the remotest faith. Even if a handful of uninteresting and frightened people monopolize present day Christian expression, we cannot confuse their sloppy sayings with the good monopolized.

But, quite frankly, even Christian discussion at its worst shows up well beside the popular topics of the times — talking about our self, our party, our trip or our war. One wonders if the poorest expression of faith in its most barbaric state is not a more durable subject than a blow by blow description of an operation, or a play by play definition of some athletic exercise, or even the day in and day out comment on the weather, as healthy as these subjects may be in their place.

Surely the prevailing silence on the subject of Christianity among men cannot be traced directly to its long ancestry of mishandling by holy Joe voices covered with sticky sentiment, as offensive as all that is to us. I think we must look elsewhere for the reason. And whatever the reason is it would appear much more likely that men avoid coming to grips with the Word's announcement for fear they may have to change, for fear of others' comment, or perhaps for fear of finding God.

VI

But regardless of the reasons for turning Christian volume down and off, our major concern here is that such treatment will silence forever the faith of our fathers. For if we Christians keep our convictions to ourselves long enough, our most avid opponents need not concern themselves with any attack — the Cause will be crushed by our whisper's weight.

Consider the paralyzing effect the spell of silence has always cast over our religion. It has turned up in every era as the curse of Christianity. No fights, nor storms, nor even stonings but tongue-tied Christians have silenced it. Hitler did not rule Fascist Germany by his own say-so. One scholar explains that they had taken God out of the University in Germany fifty years before, that silence might empty the room into which Hitler moved. We may raise our hands in horror at the Roman persecution of early Christendom. But as they were, however, they offered the dramatic stage upon which Christian men could show the stuff they were made of.

Education

Seeing silence in this light explains why Christians cannot help but be uneasy about the present practice of keeping religion out of the public schools. As knotty as the problem is, Christianity's absenteeism among the courses is much worse for it than is outright atheism were a regular part of the school's program of indoctrination. By saying little or nothing at all in the classroom, we call the importance of the tremendous claims Christ makes into question. Leaving any study of it out of the curriculum altogether is, in a very disturbing way, the most conclusive condemnation our country could make against its professed conviction. Benedict Arnold and Aaron Burr are given a greater part in the preparation of our country, more space in the pages of the text books, than the man whom we have the temerity to suggest here is the most influential person of all. This practice cannot help but hurt Him standing in students' eyes. The fact that public education does not allow Christianity to make a sound in the full week's work it takes so seriously makes the pitifully irregular hour a fraction of the students spend on Sunday morning appear irrelevant to the main business of life. The verdict toward the Nazarene of children educated in such a system cannot help but be prejudiced.

And so it is in our own homes today. We give significance to whatever it is we call attention, and at the same time inevitably cast aspersion on whatever it is we ignore in our communications. If in our "dinner table talk" through the years, there is a noticeable verbal Christian truancy, the effect will have been more telling by far than if we had fought faith "tooth and nail" at every bite.

It is in this light that we must consider our obligation to take our Christianity and tell it to the places where men haven't heard, to loosen our tongues before ears open to us. It is with this justification that we choose to break the ominous spiritual silence that prevails. And nothing under

nines Christ's strength or exposes it more critically to catastrophe now — than our failure to articulate his word.

Turning to the New Testament we notice that this criminal silence is met as we might suspect. The cry everywhere is to break it, wherever and however it exists. "No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a bushel, but on a stand, that those who enter may see the light." Said Jesus to his disciples: "What I tell you in the dark utter in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops." And finally when the Pharisees advised Jesus to rebuke his disciples that Palm Sunday for praising him so extravagantly, he answered simply: "I tell you if these were silent the very stones would cry out."

What a calamity it would have been if the Creator had chosen to keep his mouth shut on that first Christmas Eve, keeping the story forever to himself. It was, rather, because he decided to break the silence of that night with Christian speech that it was made holy. Perhaps remembering the memorable effect the telling of that news had in the ear of some shepherds, might give modern men new heart in this darkness now to step ahead several paces more with Him who "came preaching" and "sound off" in Christian tones loving enough to be loud, learned enough to be clear.

Pulpit Calendar

Feb. 1 — 4th Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 8 — The Transfiguration. Race Relations Sunday.
Feb. 11 — Ash Wednesday.
Feb. 13 — World Day of Prayer.
Feb. 15 — Universal Day of Prayer for Students.
Feb. 15-22 — Brotherhood Week.
Feb. 22 — 2nd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 1 — 3rd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 8 — 4th Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 15 — Passion Sunday.
Mar. 22 — Palm Sunday.
Mar. 22-28 — Holy Week.
Mar. 25 — The Annunciation.
Mar. 26 — Maundy Thursday.
Mar. 27 — Good Friday.
Mar. 29 — Easter.
Apr. 5 — 1st Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 12 — 2nd Sunday after Easter. National Christian College Day.
Apr. 19 — 3rd Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 26 — 4th Sunday after Easter.

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Book Reviews

I Believe in God. *By Costen J. Harrell. Abingdon. $1.25.*

I Believe in the Bible. *By Joseph R. Sizoo. Abingdon. $1.25.*

I Believe in the Holy Spirit. *By Ernest F. Scott. Abingdon. $1.25.*

METHODISTS are sometimes charged with being too organization-minded, nontheological, interested only in the practical aspects of Christian faith. Maybe there is some truth in these charges — I shall not debate them here. But that they are not wholly true is evidenced at two extremes of publication by the monumental twelve-volume *Interpreter's Bible,* now completed, and by the less ambitious but very useful "Know Your Faith" series, of which I have been asked to comment on the second, third and fourth volumes. This series when completed will consist of eight brief but competently written books of theology for laymen.

To begin back a step, the first is *I Believe* by Gerald Kennedy, Methodist bishop of the Los Angeles area. This gives the "what and why" of Christian belief in the author's characteristically invigorating manner. Next to appear is *I Believe in God* by Bishop Harrell of the Birmingham and Charlotte areas. The Methodist succession is then interrupted by Dr. Joseph Sizoo, long-time minister of the Reformed Church in America and now professor of religion and director of the chapel at George Washington University, who writes *I Believe in the Bible.* An ecumenical spirit is again demonstrated in the choice of the fourth author, the late Professor Ernest F. Scott of Union Theological Seminary, who brings his New Testament studies to bear upon the writing of *I Believe in the Holy Spirit,* giving a helpful discussion of this often-neglected doctrine.

To look at the last three in sequence, Bishop Harrell's book is preaching and personal witness at its best. The presentation abounds in helpful illustrations, and in the chapter on "God in Nature" there is much supporting scientific evidence that the universe cannot be the product of chance. The discussion moves from God in nature through God in man to God in Christ, with faith as the key to the whole. The chapter on "God in Man" is the one most open to challenge. While it is refreshing not to find man's sinfulness labored as the dominant note, as it is in much contemporary theology, the approach through man's yearning for God, conscience, the progress evident in history, and the witness of the soul's experience of God may be charged with bypassing some of the negative evidence. Though it may not convince the skeptic, as testimony to the positive side of the picture it will reinforce faith.

Dr. Sizoo's book makes no pretense at giving in its eighty pages a systematic analysis of the content of the Bible. Yet for a person who wants to know what the Bible is all about, or for one who needs to make the transition as painlessly as possible from a literal to a historical-vital understanding of it, I should not know a better book to put in his hands. And in spite of the fact that theologians often talk as if liberalism were a thing of the past, there are still millions of persons who need to make this transition! The book presents a very skillful interweaving of personal testimony, historical interpretation, concrete illustrative material from the Bible, and the basic emphasis of Christian faith. I could take issue with a statement here and there, such as this word about the claims of Jesus, "There never lived a man who made such gigantic claims. He guaranteed to rewrite the history of the world" (56), but this does not alter my high regard for the book a whole.

I Believe in the Holy Spirit is ap parently Dr. Scott's last book. It one of his best, and though brief an simple, a fitting climax to his life scholarly study of the New Testamen I should not have thought of selec ing him to write a book for laymen but he has done it. And he has don it clearly and beautifully. There ar five chapters which deal respectivel with what we mean by the Spiri what it does, how it is related to Go and Christ, its relation to man, an our need of the Spirit today. Do no be startled that I say "it" rather tha "He," for Dr. Scott does so withou surrendering the doctrine of the Tri ity. In fact, he insists that the doctrin of the Trinity is much more than doctrine; it is our foundation for dail living.

In the crucial chapter on the Spirit relation to God and Christ, the autho presents the evidence that the Ne Testament does not have a doctrin of the Trinity and its writers do no speak of the Spirit as a person. Eve where they appear to do so, the bas idea is of the power of God comin into human lives (47). Yet this doe not invalidate either the Trinity o the Spirit. "For the first believers th Spirit was the one thing they coul be certain of. It was present wit them. They could see it working an could feel it in their own hearts" (53 Accordingly for Christian experienc "I believe in the Spirit" is the ver foundation of religion.

The last chapter gives a not ver optimistic picture of the present scen slanted toward the darker side as muc as Bishop Harrell's view of God i man is toward the brighter. Yet bot would agree that God is victor ove evil. The book ends with the challeng that we not only *need* but *can find* an *can follow* the Spirit, and it will lea us unto all truth. To this finding, no only this book and the other two, bu the series as a whole may well con tribute. — *Georgia Harkness, Pacifi School of Religion, Berkeley, Cal fornia.*

Bible

Westminster Introductions to the Books of the Bible. *Prepared b the editors of the Westminster Stud Edition of the Holy Bible. West minster. $3.75.*

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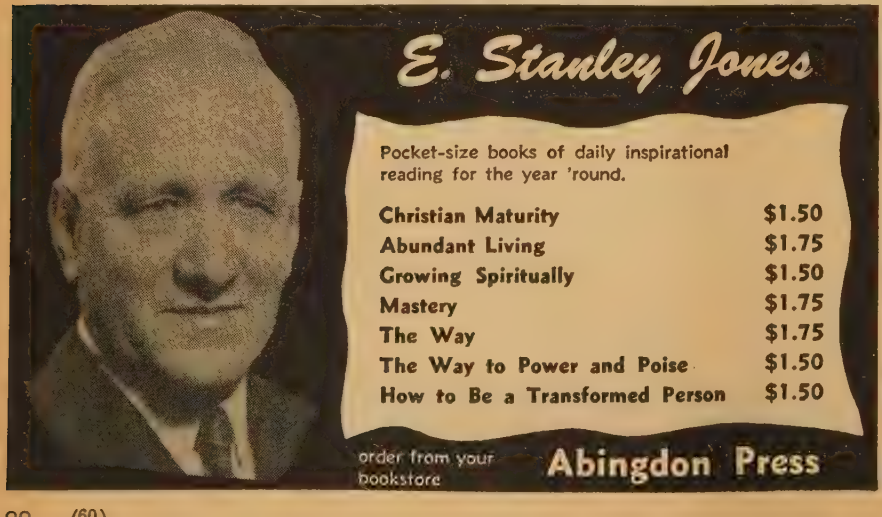
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biblical criticism. Reviewing the entire effort in this sequence, we might say, to change the metaphor, that they have attempted to dull the critical meataxe while sharpening the critical scalpel. After an introduction which points to the activity of God, to his speaking in the Scriptures, to the arrow which itself points to Jesus Christ, each book is taken in sequence. In most cases the plan and purpose of the book, its authorship, context and setting is detailed, and if there is a particular riddle or theological heart to each, these receive separate examination. On the average, each book of the Bible receives three pages of treatment.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE. *By Fred J. Denbeaux. Westminster. $1.00.*

PROFESSOR Denbeaux of Wellesley College presents here a serious call to a devout, holy, and critical study of the Bible on the part of laymen. He does not set out to attract laymen by means of easy solutions or promises that the Scriptures have easy answers or descriptions of easy methods of getting at the Word of God in the Bible. But the layman who will join with the church in the best method of biblical study, *listening,* will be amply rewarded as he follows Denbeaux in recalling the covenant bond and the direction of history which leads to God's revelation in Jesus Christ and the new creation in Christ. Denbeaux's approach has overtones of the emphasis of H. Richard Niebuhr as he identifies *a* story of long ago with *our* story today. This eleventh volume in the twelve volume Westminster series for laymen has less of the vibrancy and dance than some of its predecessors, but in its own more solid and stolid fashion it accomplishes as much as any of them. Even the professional student will have learned a little more from it, concerning the understanding of the Bible.

STUDIES IN GENESIS. *By D. T. Niles. Westminster. $2.50.*

THERE are as many books of Genesis as there are readers of Genesis. Daniel T. Niles makes no effort to deny this. The book of origins which compresses mystery inside miracle inside riddle inside enigma is to be unfolded and unwrapped in the lives of its readers. Perhaps nothing has done so much to destroy the purpose of the book of Genesis as verse-by-verse exegesis, prosaic stomping on the mysteries, or misuse of the book in false apologies for a "biblical world-view." Niles, after indicating his debt to the various methods of scriptural study, admits that in the last analysis all he is doing is telling us what happens when he reads his Bible. Those of us who have enjoyed the work of Niles in the past would be content to kibitz on any terms but past familiarity with his work gives a double measure of confidence. Niles knows how to tell what he has read; his sentences pile grace upon grace with grace; his chapters ask the questions which all of us feel the need of asking and his answers all proceed out of one conte and one center. That center produc a spiral out of the last sentence the book: "History ends and begi at Bethlehem."

THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MODE ENGLISH. *Translated by J. Phillips. Macmillan. $6.00.*

HAVING been nudged volume volume into purchasing Ph lips' piecemeal translations, *The G pels, The Young Church in Actio* the *Book of Acts, Letters to You Churches,* and the *Book of Revelatio* our first reaction to the announc ment that these were to be collect into a one-volume translation of t New Testament was a feeling of ha ing been cheated. Of course, we a knew all along that Phillips, his pu lisher and his readers, would not l this major achievement of twentie century biblical translation be sca tered and dissipated in the fascicl And now the moment that it h appeared in one volume we are rea to forgive all; more than their mo ey's worth has come from the pa investments and we could wish f nothing less now than this one vo ume compilation. It belongs on eve desk and in every lectern or pulp It is inconceivable that we could ac anything new by way of familiariz tion with Phillips' intent or achiev ment. In a brief introduction th translator resists the idea that o casional paraphrase implies direct i terpretation. Incidentally, keep th earlier separate purchases: their e cellent introductions do not reappe here.

MORE NEW TESTAMENT WORDS. *B Willaim Barclay. Harper & Brot ers. $3.00.*

THE United States, England, Ce lon, and now Scotland ar represented in this current cycle o biblical introductions. Scotland hold its place in this new word-book b Barclay. The dust jacket quotes Th Pulpit concerning his earlier book "He writes as one who loves word especially New Testament words, fo he makes them live." This is sti true. There are limits to the wor study method of approach to Bibl study with which we have becom familiar in a *Companion to the Bible a Theological Word Book of the Bible,* and the translations of key word from Kittel's German dictionaries Barclay, recognizing these limitations is by no means content with simpl linguistic analysis. Instead he write theological essays concerning each From *agape* to *splagchnizesthai* h leads the reader down various bypath of scriptural revelation: The Chris tian Hope, The Royal Command, Th Word of Authority, The Word o Reconciliation; in each he finds i necessary to become involved, to for sake the traditional lexicographica detachment. For example, on th

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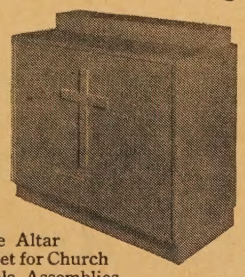

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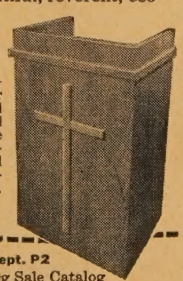

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Barclay, out of his involvement, is capable of involving his readers; his words are each worth a thousand words.

Man

THE MAN IN THE MIRROR. *Studies in the Christian Understanding of Selfhood. By Alexander Miller. Doubleday. $3.95.*

IF good theology is preachable theology, then on the threshold of the first rank in present-day America is the work of Alexander Miller, professor of religion at Stanford University. His newest contribution to "The Christian Faith" series is preoccupied as was his initial work for it, *The Renewal of Man,* with Christian anthropology. In this work he moves beyond the question of the situation of man to the place of man in history: "We are in history as a fish is in water." And man in quest of selfhood must look in the mirror of history. But there is a point and a moment in history which tells man more about himself than any other mirror that he might use.

Quoting Karl Barth, Miller contends, "Man is the creature made visible in the mirror of Jesus Christ." Christ is the catalyst, the axis, the mirror — by this Miller intends to say that the mirror of Christ is somehow crucial for man's understanding of history and life. A staggering wealth of allusion and an impressive dispelling of illusion, a perceptiveness that readers have come to associate with Miller's work, the frequent touches of humor, the telling logic, all these familiar marks are prominent in *The Man in the Mirror.* Unless we miss our guess, they are going to become prominent by second hand in many sermons across the land. The sermons will profit from this reference.

WHAT, THEN, IS MAN? *A Symposium of Theology, Psychology, and Psychiatry. Concordia. $3.50.*

MUCH more prosaic, more scattered, and less exciting is this full-range view of man prepared by several scholars in the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. Most of the chapters were written by or prepared under the guidance of Dr. Paul Meehl, head of the department of psychology at the University of Minnesota. The resultant product is an extremely thorough analysis of the personality sciences from a conservative theological viewpoint.

The chapters are somewhat uneven; some seem to be introduced into the book simply because they were part of past symposia, while others move with logic and grace to their telling points. The writers are somewhat too conscious of the fact that theoretical issues would expectably be discussed by "the Missourians" (and no one else?) and they make too much of a now out of date liberal Protestantism as their foil. Had this parochialism been avoided, the work would have been of more worth to the larger public than it now is. But for its review of the current status of tensions between psychology and theology, and relations between faith and personality, the symposium should find its place; it does bring together materials that are not so easily accessible elsewhere.

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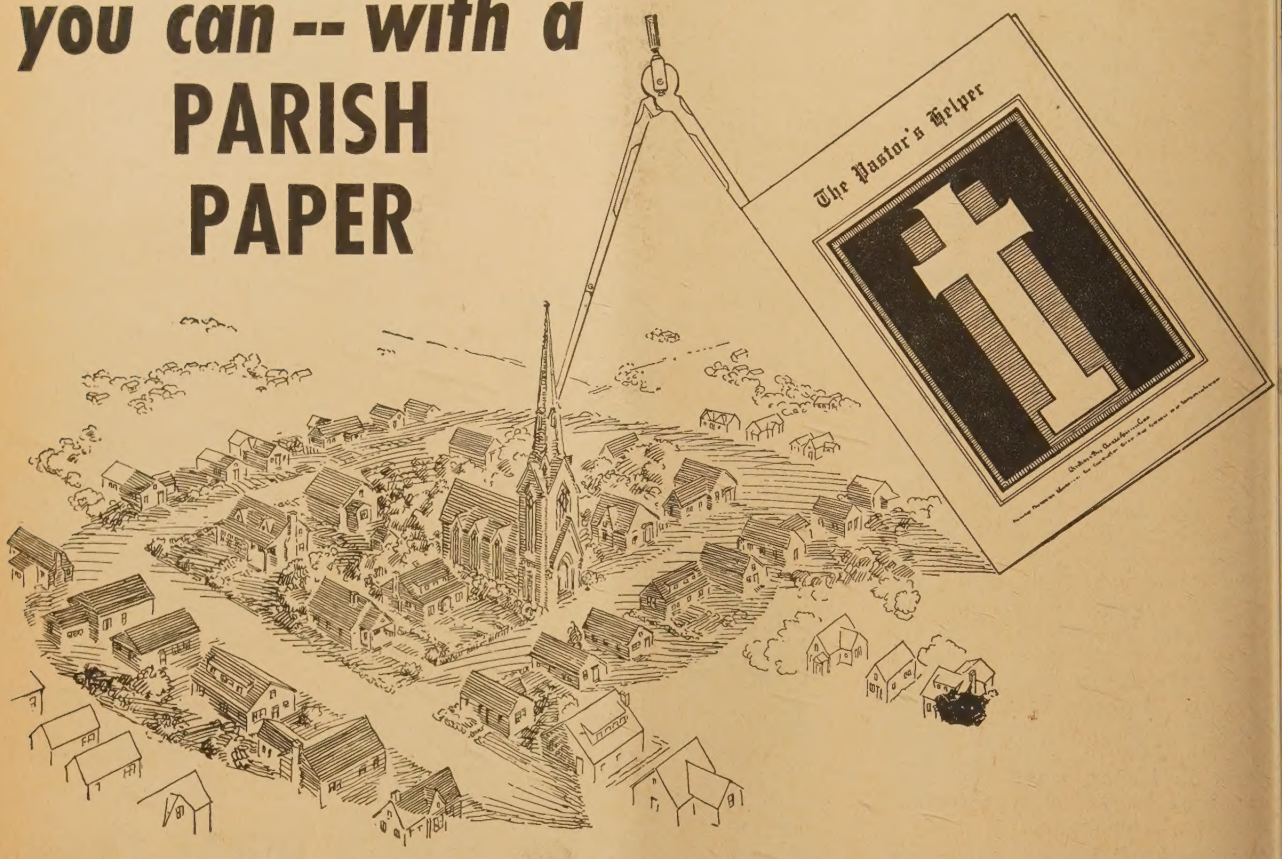

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